

CULTURAL PORTRAIT HANDBOOK 2



Patan Durbar Square

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Published in 2006 by

United Nations Educational,
Scientific and
Cultural Organization
Kathmandu Office
KAT-CLT-2005/2006

Printed by

Design Venture Pvt. Ltd.

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KAT/2006/PI/H/2

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HANUMAN DHOKA DURBAR SQUARE



PATAN DURBAR SQUARE



BHAKTAPUR DURBAR SQUARE



BAUDDHANATH



SWAYAMBHU



PASHUPATI



CHANGU NARAYAN

CULTURAL PORTRAIT HANDBOOKS

Heritage and culture can be discovered and enjoyed throughout the Kathmandu Valley. Seven monument zones in particular were recognised to be of outstanding universal value by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) and have therefore been added to the List of World Heritage Sites (WHL).

The WHL includes cultural and natural heritage sites from all over the world, and the World Heritage Convention provides a legal tool for their protection. Of the 812 World Heritage Sites, four are located in Nepal, namely the Kathmandu Valley, Sagarmatha National Park, Royal Chitwan National Park and Lumbini, the birthplace of Lord Buddha.

The diverse monument zones of the Kathmandu Valley embody the uniquely intricate and yet refined Newari urban buildings and an incredible mix of Hindu and Buddhist culture. The Valley provides an example of mixed architectural styles and exquisite craftsmanship. Its very composition makes it one of the most complex World Heritage Sites on the WHL: not only does it

include the historic centers of the Valley's three main cities; it also encompasses remarkable living Hindu and Buddhist monuments.

The site was listed as a World Heritage Site in 1979 as bearing a unique testimony to a cultural tradition which is living (criteria iii) and is an outstanding example of a group of buildings that illustrate a significant stage in human history (criteria iv). The Valley is also the context for many living traditions and events, with artistic works of outstanding universal value (criteria vi).

This hand book is one of seven that were prepared as part of a wider awareness raising campaign aimed at focusing both local and international attention on the need to preserve the Kathmandu Valley WHS. Generous funding from the National Federation of UNESCO Associations in Japan (NFUAJ) has enabled the UNESCO Office in Kathmandu to prepare these publications highlighting the gems of the Valley and their rich mythological and historical background.



KATHMANDU VALLEY: History and Architecture overview

by Kai Weise

EARLY HISTORY

The Swayambhu Purana relates the myth of the creation of the Kathmandu Valley to the existence of a great lake, the Taodhanahrada. It has been geologically verified that a lake did exist in the Valley during the Pleistocene era.

The Kiratas, mentioned in Hindu religious books such as the Mahabharata, are believed to have ruled the Valley as far back as the 7th century BC. The mention of non-Sanskrit names in Licchavi inscriptions indicates that the Valley was at that time ruled by an ethnic group that spoke a Tibeto-Burman or possibly 'proto-Newari' language. The Kiratas probably had their capital in Gokarna and founded the holy site at Gokameshvara. The four stupas in the cardinal directions around Patan, known as the Ashoka stupas, are considered to date back to this period.

LICCHAVI PERIOD

c. 200 TO c. 750 AD

The origin of the Licchavi rulers is not exactly known. They may have broken away from the northern Indian branch during the first half of the 3rd century, or even earlier, however it is also possible that local rulers in the Kathmandu Valley adopted this name. The arts and politics

of the Licchavis were influenced by the highly developed lingas, which is why this period is often referred to as the “Classical Era” of Kathmandu. During this period, trade

links between India and Tibet grew, bringing with it prosperity and religious tolerance.

The earliest inscription in the Valley, found at Changu Narayan in 464 AD, dates back to this period. The Licchavi kings founded some of the Valley’s most venerable shrines, including the Vaishnavite temple of Changu Narayan, the Shivaite temple of Pashupati and the Buddhist stupa of Swayambhu.

Other than chaityas and primitive shelters housing lingas, a number of fine quality sculptures from the

Licchavi period have remained preserved in situ in the Valley. No larger buildings survive from the Licchavi period, mainly because, although most of the holy sites were already established by the 8th century, these buildings were generally reconstructed and embellished during the Malla period.

THAKURI PERIOD

c. 750 TO 1200 AD

Little evidence is remaining of the period between the Licchavis and the Mallas, which is referred to as the “Post-Lichhavi Period (C. 879 – 1200)” or even the “Dark Ages”. In 879 AD, the “Nepal Samvat”, a new era, began. At that time a large number of migrants, fleeing from the Muslim invasion in northern India, came to the Valley, which was controlled by powerful nobles known as the Thakuris. Close links were kept with the Pala dynasty in Bengal.

At this time Vajrayana Buddhism and Tantrism became widespread in the Valley.



In the 10th century, King Gunakamadeva is attributed with founding Kathmandu in the form of Manjushri's sword. Kasthamandapa in Kathmandu, Kwa Baha in Lalitpur and the Tripura Palace in Bhaktapur were also founded. From the 11th century onwards manuscripts emerged from the viharas and bahas, though the quality of stone sculpture deteriorated.

Even though the Valley must have been strewn with settlements, viharas and bahas by the 12th century, only a few buildings from this period remain. One of the oldest existing buildings in the Valley is the Kasthamandapa, in Kathmandu Durbar Square, which was probably founded in the first half of the 12th century. However, renovations and added embellishments have given the building a very "Malla Style" appearance.

EARLY MALLA PERIOD 1200 TO 1382 AD

The early Malla period is poorly documented, and very few structures remain. This can be attributed to the regular raiding, looting and sacking of the Valley by neighbouring kingdoms during the late 13th to the mid 14th centuries.

The first Malla ruler, Ari Malla, reigned from 1200 to 1216. However it is not known how he overcame the Licchavi and Thakuri rulers. The suggestion has been made that these Mallas were descendents of an ancient lineage mentioned in the Buddhist and Hindu scriptures; however the more likely version would be that the new kings adopted the name, which in Sanskrit means "wrestler" or "victor".

LATE MALLA PERIOD 1382 TO 1768 AD

It was only after 1382, when Sthiti Malla usurped power that some stability came to the Valley. Between 1484 and 1619, the three separate Malla city-states of Kathmandu, Lalitpur (Patan) and Bhaktapur emerged. These three states were constantly feuding, until they were finally conquered by Pritivi Narayan Shah in the mid 18th century.

This period is often described as the 'Golden Age' for art, architecture and craftwork in the Valley. The Mallas developed the craft of constructing with bricks and wood to perfection. The buildings, whether temples, palaces or dwellings, are adapted to the climate, as well as having aesthetic finesse.

Competition between the three kingdoms resulted in the creation of the magnificent Durbar Squares, with the palaces and array of temples and shrines. The Malla kings became greatly influenced by Brahmin scholars and gave increasing importance to Hindu deities such as Pashupati and Taleju. Consequently, the responsibility of tending to the major Buddhist shrines was taken over by the Tibetan immigrants.

EARLY SHAH PERIOD 1768 TO 1846 AD

During the Indra Jatra festival in September 1768, the Gorkhali forces, led by Pritivi Narayan Shah, marched into Kathmandu. One year later, Patan and Bhaktapur were also under control of the Gorkhas. The military campaign had started as early as 1685

and continued till the signing of the Treaty of Sugauli in 1816. With the signing of this treaty, the present boundaries of the Kingdom of Nepal, with its capital in Kathmandu were defined and the Shah dynasty was installed as the rulers of the new kingdom.

After conquering the Valley, the Shahs adopted the "Malla style", even propagating it. However, a Mogul influence can be observed in certain buildings such as the extensions made to the Palace in Kathmandu, the Dharara tower and the old Bag Durbar built by Bhimsen Thapa. Even the "Malla style" private buildings underwent some change and adjustments with time, though a complete new style was not developed, nor introduced.

RANA RULE 1846 TO 1951 AD

In 1846, Jung Bahadur Kunwar became Prime Minister when, during the Kot Massacre, most of his political rivals were slain. Through an edict bearing the King's red seal, all sovereign powers were wrested from the King. The position of Prime Minister, Commander-in-Chief and the title of Maharaj of Kaski and Lamjung became hereditary, the line of succession being reserved for the next oldest member of the Rana family.

In 1850, Jung Bahadur visited Europe, bringing back a taste for 19th-century European fashion. In contrast the period of Rana Rule is defined by the conscious isolation of the country from outside influence. This was clearly politically motivated, to consolidate their position within the country and

to minimize interference from the neighbouring countries.

Inspired by Neo-classical Europe and the British colonial architecture in neighbouring India, the Ranas built white stucco palaces. With time, the dwellings took on their own 'Rana' style, either by copying decorative elements or reproducing miniature palaces.

The severe earthquake of 1934 recorded a magnitude 8.4 on the Richter scale and caused widespread devastation in the Valley. Several thousand people were killed and the majority of buildings were destroyed or damaged beyond repair. The post-disaster reconstruction effort was pursued in typical 'Rana' style, as can still be seen in the environs of New Road, Kathmandu.

CONTEMPORARY PERIOD 1951 TO PRESENT

King Tribhuvan regained his hereditary power from the Rana regime with the help of intellectuals in exile in India, the opposition faction of the Ranas and the newly formed Indian government under Nehru. 1951 saw Nepal open its borders to the world, which allowed foreign aid to help develop infrastructure, and improve health and education. After a decade of experimenting with parliamentary democracy, King Mahendra dissolved the parliament on 15 December 1960. The party-less 'panchayat' system was introduced in 1962, which ended with the restoration of multi-party democracy in 1990.

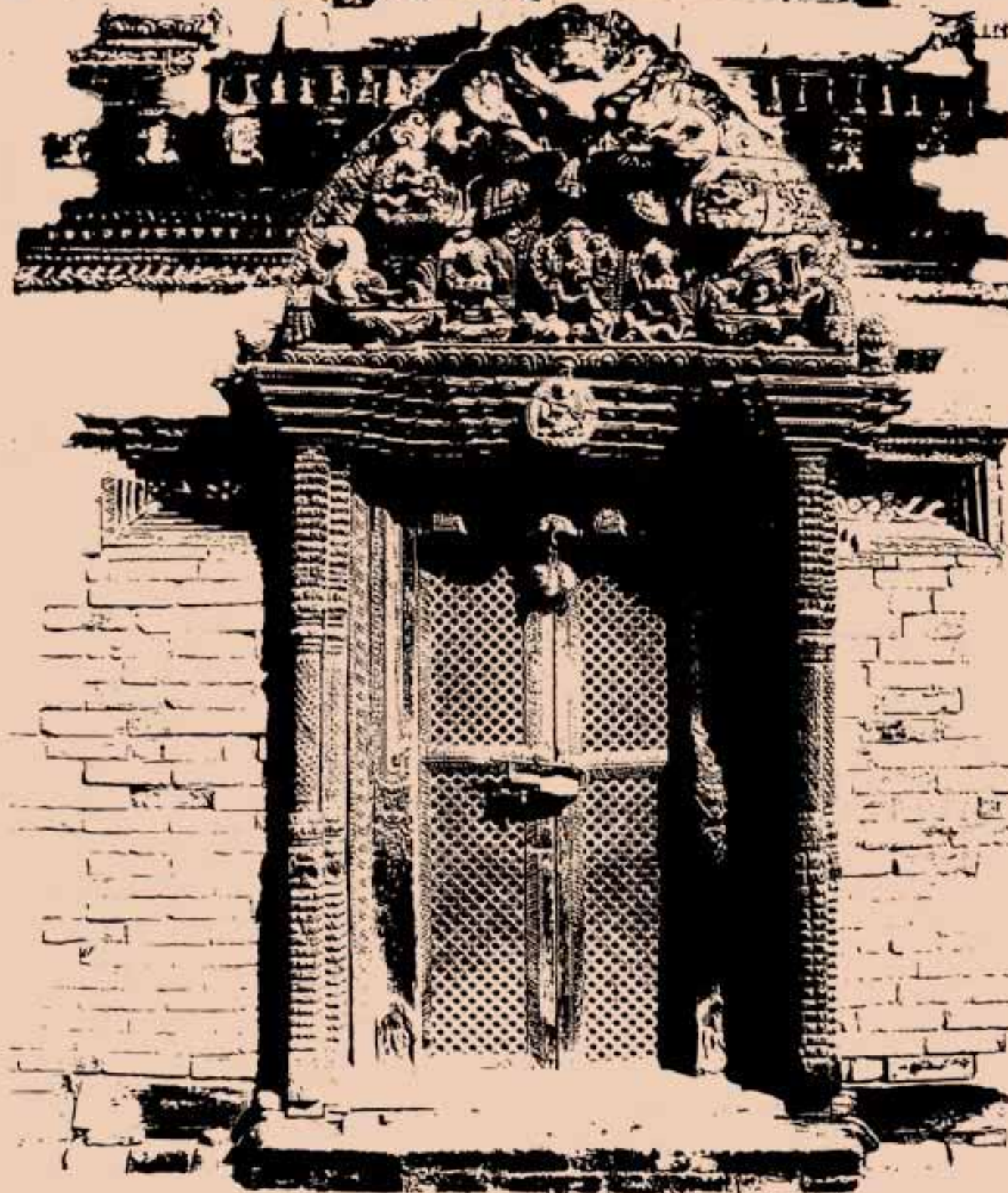


The stability of multi-party democracy was undermined after the massacre of a large part of the Royal Family on 1 June 2001 and the Maoist insurgency left the country in turmoil, leading to the dissolution of parliament. On 1 February 2005 King Gyanendra assumed absolute control of the country. The people of Nepal,

however, felt differently and initiated the Janadolan II (democracy) movement in April 2006 which resulted in the reinstatement of parliament and the review of the constitution.

During the last half of the 20th century, Reinforced Cement Concrete brought about new possibilities, mainly constructing tall slender buildings. The trend of hereditary vertical division of properties has created smaller plots, and buildings tend to have 5-6 floors in stead of 3. Recently a new trend of pseudo-newari style buildings is emerging, instigated by building bylaws conceived to preserve the monument zones.





Patan, or Lalitpur, lies across the Bagmati River south of Kathmandu. Patan is considered to be the oldest among the three cities in the valley. Settlements must have existed in the area as early as the 7th century BC during the Kirat period. However, inscriptions only verify the existence of settlements during the late Licchavi period around the 7th century AD.

It is said that there was once an ugly grass cutter who visited Mani Jogini in the Kathmandu Valley to sell grass. One day, while he was cutting grass he felt extremely thirsty, so he stuck his yoke, which he used for carrying loads in the ground and went in search of water. He looked everywhere but could not find a single drop to drink. Finally, he found a tank and bathed and drank from it. When he emerged from the depths of the water he had been transformed into a handsome man. He went to the city to sell his grass and there the king saw him. The king was surprised at this sudden transformation and named him Lalit, which means "beautiful". The king wanted to build a memorial on the spot where the miracle took place but could not find a suitable name for it until a voice in a dream advised him to call it Lalit Patan and asked him to build a city around it. The next morning the king sent Lalit across the Bagmati River with a vast sum of money and ordered him to build a city named Lalitpur.



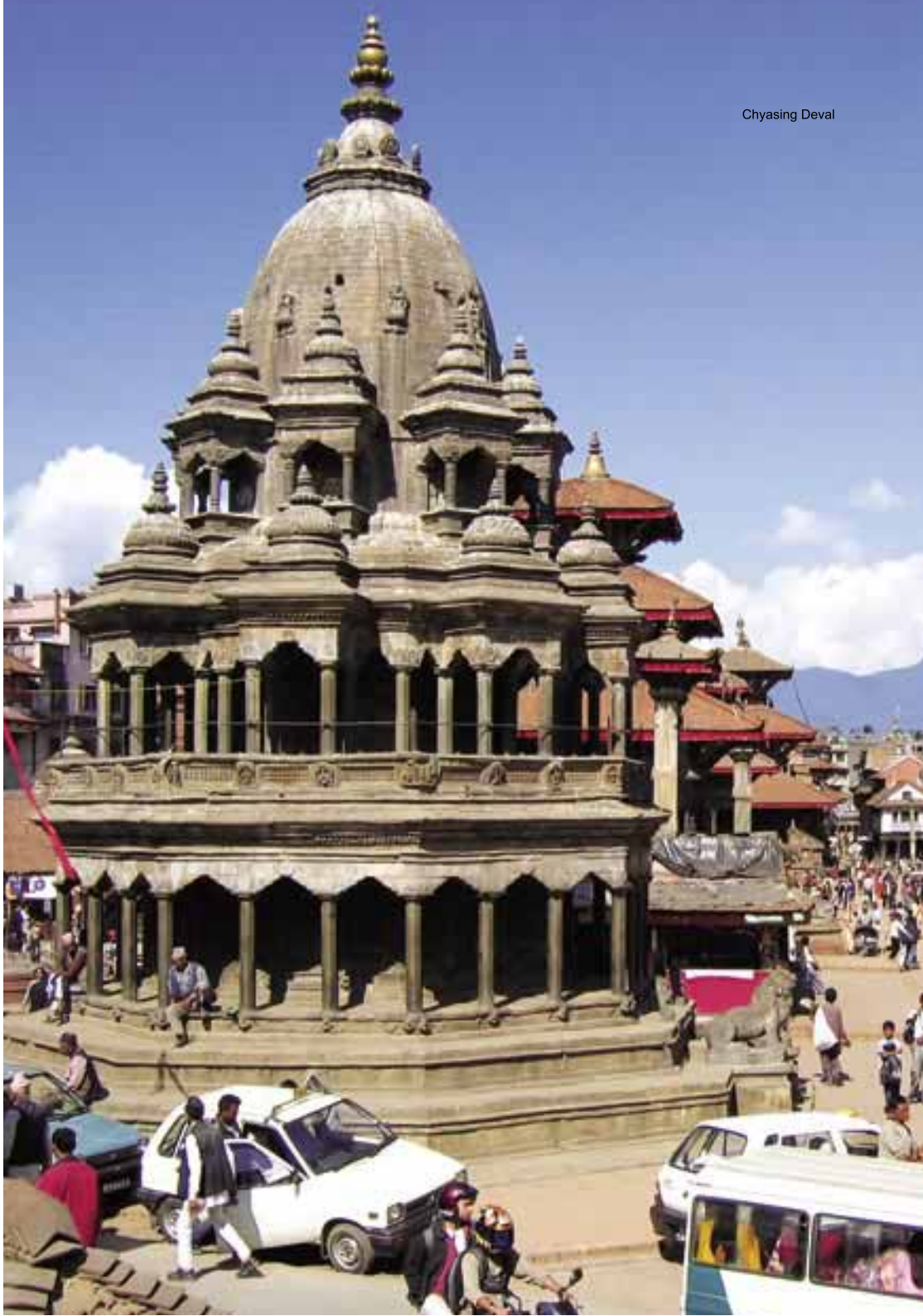
PATAN DURBAR SQUARE

At the centre of Patan is the **Durbar Square**, which groups the former royal palace complex and a large number of the town's main temples.

Until the unification of Nepal by Prithvi Narayan Shah in the late 18th century, Lalitpur was one of the three royal city-states within the Valley, led by its own royal family that was responsible for erecting the palace complex and temples of the Durbar Square. The extensive palace complex at the east side of the square is no longer inhabited and part of it has been turned into a museum. The temples of the Durbar Square face the entrance of the palace complex and were built under royal patronage, generally in honour of deceased family members.



Chyasing Deval



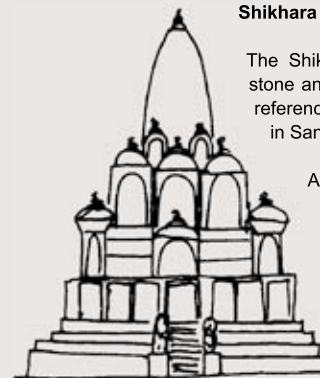
Although smaller than those in Kathmandu and Bhaktapur, the Patan Durbar Square is visually perhaps the most attractive.

Since Patan was no longer a capital after the unification of Nepal, its Durbar Square escaped additions by consecutive rulers, especially during the Rana period. Therefore, in contrast to the Durbar Square of Kathmandu, Patan's historic square has retained, to a large extent, its plan from earlier periods.

In the busy streets of **Mangal Bazaar**, the main commercial area running along the west of the Square, there is today no space for solitude or quiet. The labyrinth of narrow streets and lanes is crammed with vehicles, peddlers, hurrying pedestrians and kamikaze motorcycles. The crowded market place where hawkers fight for space is filled with wares displayed on the floor.

Amidst all the shouting and haggling a few porters and taxi drivers are sitting on the raised stone base of an ancient temple, observing the market place. They are seated on the steps of the fascinating **Chyasing** (eight-sided) **Deval**, which marks the entrance to the Patan Durbar Square. This temple, dedicated to Krishna, was built by the daughter of King Yoganarendra Malla in 1723. The temple was established in memory of the eight wives of Yoganarendra Malla who committed sati. Sati is an ancient Hindu custom that was practiced in both Nepal and India. According to this custom, Hindu wives are required to throw themselves onto the funeral pyre of their husbands and burn with them. The temple is built in the Shikhara style and shows a clear influence from Indian Mogul architecture, although there are very few decorative elements. The Chyasing temple is one of the only stone temples in octagonal shape within the valley. Its base is about

Shikhara Style



The Shikhara temples can easily be distinguished by the use of stone and their Indianized style. The temples are called Shikhara in reference to their tapering shape (Shikhara meaning mounting peak in Sanskrit).

Although the style developed in India in the 6th century, it only appeared in Nepal during the late Licchavi period, 9th century.

The main feature of a Shikhara temple is its tapering tower, which is often surrounded by similar but smaller towers, located on porches above the temples' entrances. Shikhara temples are generally built on a square or octagonal stepped plinth.



five feet high and two stone lions guard the entrance from where steps lead up to the 'pradaksinapath' or the circumambulatory passage. The Krishna Mandir is frequented by local people using its base stages to rest and watch the life on the square.

Next to the Chyasing Temple is a huge cast-iron bell, which hangs from a heavy frame. This is the **Taleju Bell** that was erected by King Vishnu Malla and his wife Chandra Laxmi in 1737. It was the first of its type to be installed in the Valley. However, due to the ongoing rivalry between the Valley's three city-states at that time,

Kathmandu and Bhaktapur soon copied Patan and installed their own Taleju Bells. They were used during worship and also as alarms. In Patan, the great bell stands on a very high base and is shaded by a gilt roof. Shops selling camera films, stationery, clothes and a bakery are built into the base.

The three-tiered **Hari Shankar Temple** stands next to the grand Taleju bell and is unusually dedicated to both Shiva (Shankar) and Vishnu (sometimes referred to as Hari). This temple is notable for its woodwork on both the struts supporting the roofs and the toranas (carved pannels above

the door). The central shrine houses the image of Vishnu with Laxmi and Saraswati. The Hari Shankar temple was built in the 17th century by Siddhinarasingha.

Next to the Hari Shankar temple stands the **Yoganendra Pillar**. The statue represents King Yoganendra Malla and faces the Degutale temple, part of the palace complex. The golden statue of King Yoganendra Malla sits on top of a pillar. The figure is shaded by a gilded serpent or Naga on whose head sits a small bird that is hardly noticeable, but very important to the people of Patan.



Hari Shankar temple and Yoganendra Pillar

Legend has it that King Yoganendra, after the death of his son, became tired of his life at court and his wealth. He wanted to lead the life of a hermit and decided to leave his kingdom. Yoganendra sought refuge in a remote place and never returned. The subjects were sad to see their king retire and began to mourn. In response, the king sent a message saying that as long as the bird perched on top of his statue, he would return to his kingdom. In anticipation, a window in the palace facing the pillar is kept open and his belongings are kept intact in the room behind it. There is also a light that remains burning at night. The people of Patan still await the return of the king. Standing in close proximity to the Hari Shankar Temple and facing the

Naga

The naga are snake-like beings first depicted in Vedic Hindu mythology. Stories involving the naga are still very much a part of contemporary cultural traditions in Asia. In Nepal the naga are an intricate part of myth and legend, worthy of veneration and recognised as the symbol of water and rainfall, and thus fertility and strength. When they begin to leave an area it is a biological indicator that there is a water shortage, thus a proliferation of snakes is viewed as positive in the Kathmandu Valley.

The mythological link between the serpents and the Valley dates back to the time when it was still a lake. After Manjushri sliced through the mountainside to drain the water, the serpents that had been living there were greatly disturbed. Some fled to distant lands, some slithered away to explore the depths of the ocean and others abandoned the lake, never to return. However, the Serpent-King Karkotaka, and a few others remained in Nepal, unable to abandon the Kingdom.

Narasingh temple
(background Narayan temple)



Yoganendra Pillar is the Shikhara style **Narasingh temple**. This temple was erected by King Purandar Singh in 1589 and is dedicated to the Narasingh incarnation of Vishnu. The temple has a cruciform plan with four entrances grouped around the conical tower.

A small **Narayan temple** juts out in front of an open courtyard called **Krishna Udyan** next to the Narasingh temple. The two-tiered Narayan temple was built by King Shri Nivas in 1652. It is a simple square plan structure with no circumambulatory passage and only one entrance.

The **Char Narayan Temple**, next to the smaller Narayan temple, is believed to be the oldest in Patan Durbar

Narasingh

Vishnu, one of the main Gods in Hinduism, is best known in his 10 Incarnations or Avatars. One of these incarnations is Narasingh or the Man-Lion Incarnation.

According to the myth, the demon Hiranyakasipu had obtained several blessings from Brahma which made him invincible as he could neither be killed by man nor beast, neither during the day nor at night, neither inside a house nor outside and no weapon could injure him.

As the demon became a nuisance to the Gods, they turned to Vishnu (Protector God) for help. Hiranyakasipu's son worshipped Vishnu and his devotion enraged the demon. When he questioned him about his God's abilities Vishnu burst upon the scene in his half-man half-lion incarnation (Narasingh). It was twilight and Narasingh was sitting on the threshold of the house. He seized the opportunity and split Hiranyakasipu's belly open with his claws



Square. It was built in 1566 by King Purandara Singh Malla in memory of his father.

The temple is a good example of the older type of pagoda-style temples in the Valley, with its squat proportions and dominating roof-structure. Large stone lions stand at the base of the brick plinth guarding the steps. The wooden struts supporting the roofs depict **erotic carvings**. The Char Narayan temple is dedicated to Vishnu as the God of Preservation, which is exceptional for a temple with erotic carvings, as most are dedicated to Shiva.

A platform in front of the Char Narayan temple is used for staging performances. Sometimes it is used by local musicians and dancers to display their talent. On other days, it becomes a sitting area for local men watching the crowds on the Durbar Square. Today, there is a larger crowd than usual. Excited faces have gathered and children jostle the bystanders to get a good view. Even local policemen have decided to take a break and have joined the crowd. A snake charmer has removed his snakes from the baskets and is putting on a fascinating show. Huge pythons have crawled onto the platform and have rendered the crowd dumbstruck. King cobras have expanded their hoods and are hissing with anger. The snake charmer has a pipe to his lips and is making the snakes dance to his music.

From the narrow entrance of the **Krishna Mandir**, left of the Char Narayan, an old man peeks out. He has come to ask another man to remove



Erotic Carvings

Temples are considered sacred, divine, pure and holy. To have erotic scenes displayed across the struts could be considered as an act of desecration. It is not surprising then, that such decoration lies at the centre of numerous tales that attempt to explain the remarkable motifs. Some believe that the erotic scenes were carved to protect the temple from being struck by lightning. According to this school of thought, lightning is a virgin and the erotic carvings and bestial scenes help to drive her away as she views such subjects with utter disgust. Others propose that the presence of erotic sculpture points to the fact that for Hindus, life is meant for living in all its aspects, and that the carvers were merely depicting reality. The most commonly accepted explanation is that the scenes relate to the mysterious world of **Hindu** and **Vajrayanic tantric** practices. Tantra can be summarized as the Asian body of beliefs and practices which, working from the principle that the universe is purely the physical manifestation of divine energy, seeks to ritually channel that energy in creative ways. Common variations include visualizing the deity in the act of sexual union, visualizing oneself as the deity and acts such as the consumption of meat or alcohol. Occasionally, ritualized or 'non-standard' sex may be performed, which accounts for tantra's occasionally negative reputation in parts of the Western world.





his shoes while pointing at the sign which instructs people to leave their footwear at the entrance. The man takes his shoes off reluctantly and climbs the narrow stairs that lead to the second floor. Here, an elderly woman is singing a bhajan (a Hindu devotional song) with a harmonium at her side. A tabla (south Asian drum) player accompanies her and the others stare admiringly.

The Krishna Mandir is one of the most important temples on Patan Durbar Square and is only accessible to Hindus. The temple was built by king Siddhinarasinha Malla in 1637 and its construction took six years. Legend has it that in a dream the king saw Krishna and his paramour Radha standing in front of the palace. He had the temple built on the exact spot where he had seen the God in his dream.

The temples' sanctum is on the first floor and houses an image of Krishna who stands on a dais with his wives by his side, holding a flute to his lips. The statues are carved from black stone and are heavily ornamented. The two-storey stone temple is built in Shikhara style on a square plan. It houses a good collection of very fine reliefs depicting scenes from the two great Hindu epics, the **Ramayana and Mahabharata** on the lintels above the colonnade.

The elephants at the **Visveshvar Temple** have not yet moved an inch. According to popular belief, the soul of King Siddhinarasinha will only be released and enter heaven when the elephants that guard the entrance to the temple walk down to the Mani Dhara (water fountain) in front of the temple and drink from it.

Mahabharata and the Ramayana

The Mahabharata and Ramayana form the two major historic epics in Indian culture and bring together a series of stories involving a large number of deities and mythological figures, which are still very much present in Nepali culture.

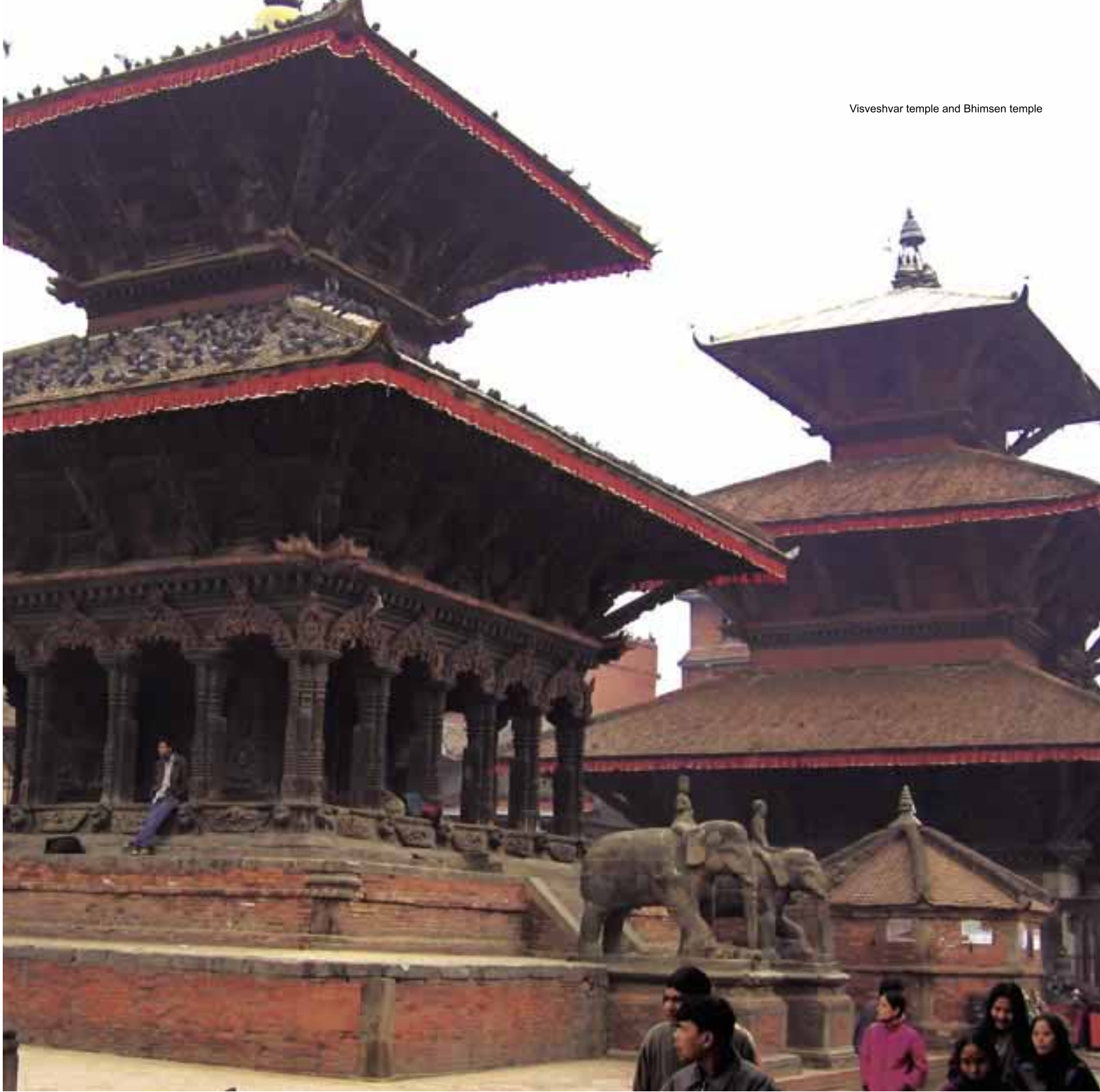
Mahabharata is an epic poem completed from 300 BC to c.500 AD that was originally concerned with a secular tale. With its 100,000 verses it is considered the longest epic poem in the world. The story concerns a never-ending battle between two royal clans, the Pandava and Kaurava families. The numerous versions vary geographically and in the way that they interpret the main events. **Krishna**, one of Hinduism's most popular gods, is introduced through the epic as an incarnation of Vishnu. The climax of the poem, is called the Bhagvadgita, or celestial song, delivered by one of the incarnations of Krishna. In the Bhagvadgita, Krishna explains about the immortality of the soul and that all activity can be considered a sacrifice as long as it is undertaken in a spirit of complete detachment. To most Hindus this sermon is their main religious text.

The **Ramayana** was completed between c.350 BC and 250 AD, and also relates originally secular events. It used to be recited at royal courts by bards. It gained religious significance only after its main figure, **Ram** was identified with Vishnu. Ram is considered the ideal King and lover. The best loved of the 7 books are the last three that tell the story of the help Ram receives from his friend **Hanuman**, the monkey king, and the battle with Ravana after Sita (Ram's wife) is kidnapped.



Visveshvar temple

Visveshvar temple and Bhimsen temple



The Visveshvar temple was built in 1627 by King Siddhinarasinha. The two stone elephants with riders on their backs stand at the base of the steps that lead to the temple's main entrance. A Nandi bull (Shiva's mount) guards the West of the temple. There are finely carved wooden columns and toranas around the main shrine. The roofs are supported by carved struts showing images of Surya – the God of the Sun, Ganesh, Annapurna, Shiva and Parvati.

The **Bhimsen Temple** is very popular among the business people of Patan. Bhimsen is the patron of merchants and the traders believe that it was he who opened the trade route to Lhasa. According to a local myth, Bhimsen, disguised as a manservant, joined the retinue that accompanied a princess to the Tibetan capital.

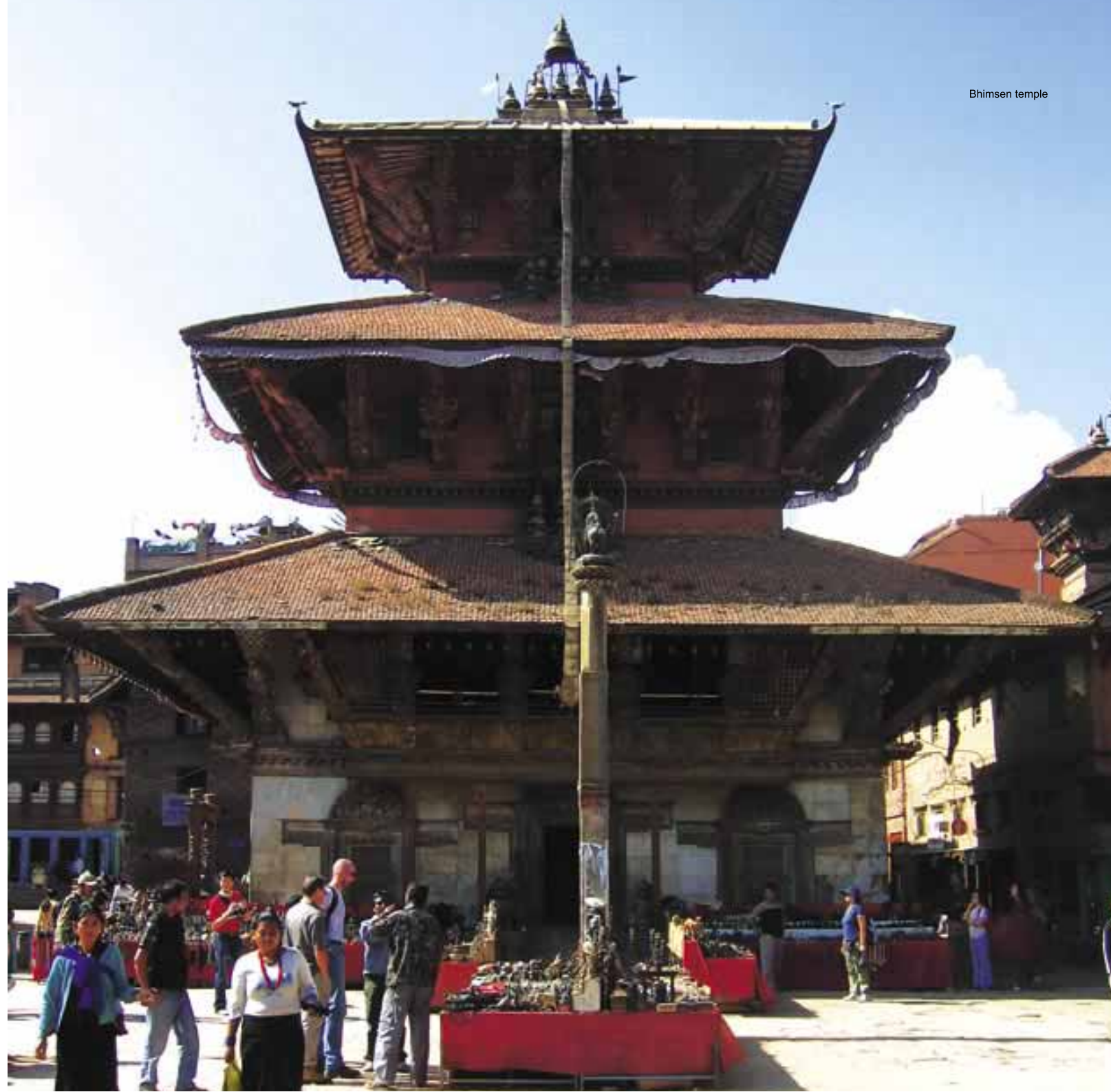
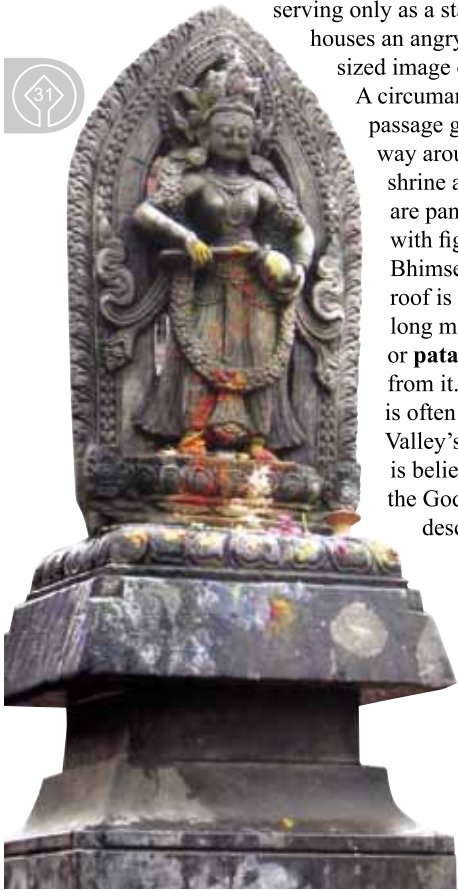
Another story claims that Bhimsen was one of the mythological figures described in the Mahabharata epic. The poem states that Bhimsen was one of the five Pandava brothers. He was known for his superhuman strength. According to the Mahabharata epic, the Pandavas were at loggerheads with their cousins, the Kauravas. One day, Duryodhana, the eldest of the Kauravas, challenged the Pandavas to a game of dice.

Aided by his scheming uncle Sakuni, Duryodhana won all the bets. The five Pandava brothers lost their kingdom, personal possessions and finally their wife Draupadi. Ecstatic at his success and intent on insulting the Pandavas, Duryodhana called upon his brother Dushashana and ordered him to

humiliate Draupadi. Dushashana thus dragged Draupadi by the hair and started to undress her in public. Draupadi prayed to the Gods who came to her aid. Bhimsen swore that he would not rest until he had killed Duryodhana. The rivalry among the cousins eventually led to the battlefield, where Bhimsen killed Duryodhana and Draupadi washed her hair with his blood.

The three-tiered Bhimsen Temple was built by King Shri Nivas Malla in 1681. It was badly damaged during the earthquake of 1934 but has since been restored and 'modernised' with glazed tiles and silver paint. The main shrine is on the second floor, the first floor serving only as a stairway, which houses an angry looking life-sized image of Bhimsen.

A circumambulatory passage goes all the way around the main shrine and there are panels painted with figures of Bhimsen. The top roof is gilded and a long metal banner or **pataka** hangs from it. The pataka is often seen in the Valley's temples and is believed to guide the Gods as they descend to earth.





NEWARI FOOD AND DRINK

Small restaurants and snack shops usually open around Bhimsen temples because it is believed that the patron god of the merchants will protect them. There is a small restaurant behind the Krishna Mandir that serves Newari cuisine. This little eatery may look dark and unfurnished but it is always overflowing with customers. They serve spicy Newari delicacies such as Choyla (roasted meat), Kachila (newari style steak tartar), Bada (black lentil paste pancake), Chatamari (rice powder pancake) and Sukuti (dried meat). These tasty snacks are washed down with plenty of chang or thon in Newari, the popular rice or millet beer and for those with a stronger constitution, fiery Newari rakshi or ayela (millet spirit).

There are two main varieties of **thon**: aithon (white) and yaithon, and it is drunk in ritual and profane contexts by both men and women. Women of the Jyapu farming caste are much prized for their thon making capabilities and offer puja (worship) after the Newari New Year (Mhapuja) to worship Ganesh in his Pakhanayedyo, the 'Lord of Fermentation' manifestation. A feast is never a feast, unless there is ample provision of thon, or if it has been replaced by ayela.

Ayela is commonly offered to welcome visitors, and is prepared and consumed during festivals in many households. Only the finest spirit should be served at weddings, where it represents the quality of the families. The Newari winter month of Pahela literally means 'the month of fermentation' and is considered as the best time for ayela to be distilled. During festivals and celebrations it is poured from fine-spouted brass vessels into small clay cups and is often described by non-Newari guests as 'Newari Tequila'!





Mani Mandapa



Manga Hiti



TRADITIONAL HITI

Opposite the Bhimsen Temple is the **Mani Dhara** or **Manga Hiti**, the Jewel Fountain. This water basin with three spouts is believed to be the oldest structure remaining in the Patan Durbar Square.

The Mani Dhara is always crowded. Men, women and children wade in ankle deep water and wait for their turn at the spout. The sunken fountain is filled with people carrying all sorts of water vessels. The local residents come to collect water or to bathe, children come to splash, the thirsty come to slake their thirst and tourists come to photograph it all.

The people believe that the stone elephants from the Vishveshvar temple across the square will join them one day and drink from the fountain. In front of the water spouts are two small pavilions, called **Mani Mandapa** or the Jewel Pavilion. They were used for the coronation of Kings during the Malla period.

This type of traditional waterspout, locally called Hiti, can be found throughout the Newari settlements of the Kathmandu Valley. Since water supply in private residences is still a rare commodity, these traditional communal water sources are still very



much used by the local population. They are used for bathing as well as for laundry or cleaning dishes and collecting water for household purposes.

The hiti also hold an important place in the community life of a settlement or neighbourhood. This is particularly true for the women who gather at the water pipe daily and share information and stories from home. In larger communities, there may be more than one hiti and thus social groups are formed around them.

In Patan, the water supply system through the hiti is centuries old and is still functioning today. The water is collected from about 12km away from the town and then channeled through open canals and covered aquaducts to reach the hiti, which are distributed throughout the town. This way, thousands of people have access to clean water every day.

Annually, just before the start of the monsoon season, a cleaning festival is held. Every community cleans its hiti and maintains the hiti system. Other than a cultural tradition, this festival is also celebrated out of necessity, as during the monsoon as much water as possible needs to be collected to supply the community for the rest of the year. Therefore, a clean and well functioning system is needed.

Today, many of the traditional hiti have disappeared, but some 35 still remain in Patan's historic center. Other than being functional water supply units, they are also beautiful works of art.



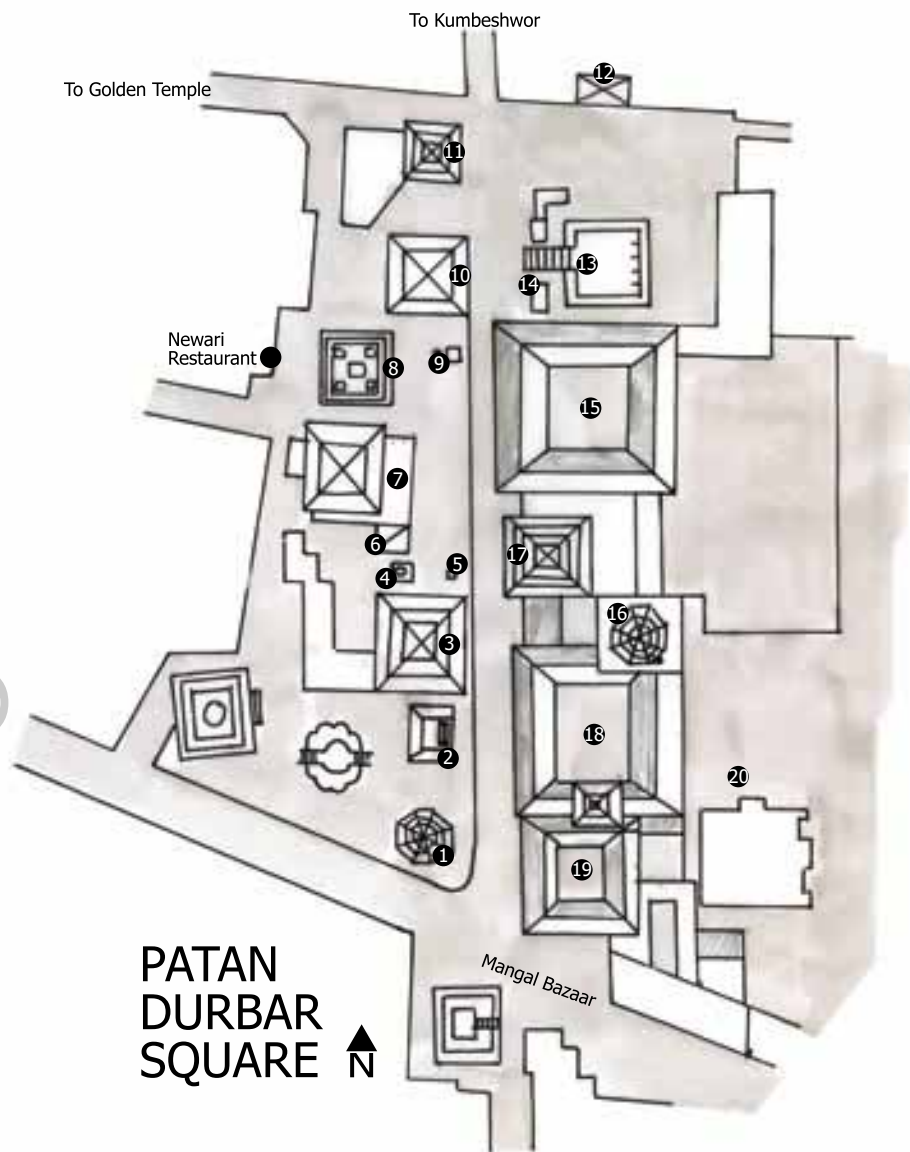
Sacred Water Sources

Ponds and water pipes were commissioned by various rulers of Nepal for both public and private use. They are fed by intricate stone waterways through which water flows from underground sources. The structures related to the storage, distribution and access to water are distinctive elements of the cultural landscape of the Kathmandu Valley.

Water is a sacred symbol: kalash, or vessels full of water are traditionally placed either side of a Newari door to bestow blessings upon the inhabitants. The public wells, fountains and ponds that store water are all considered sacred. Providing access to water is highly commendable. Over the years the altruism of royalty and common people alike has left no corner of the valley without a water source.

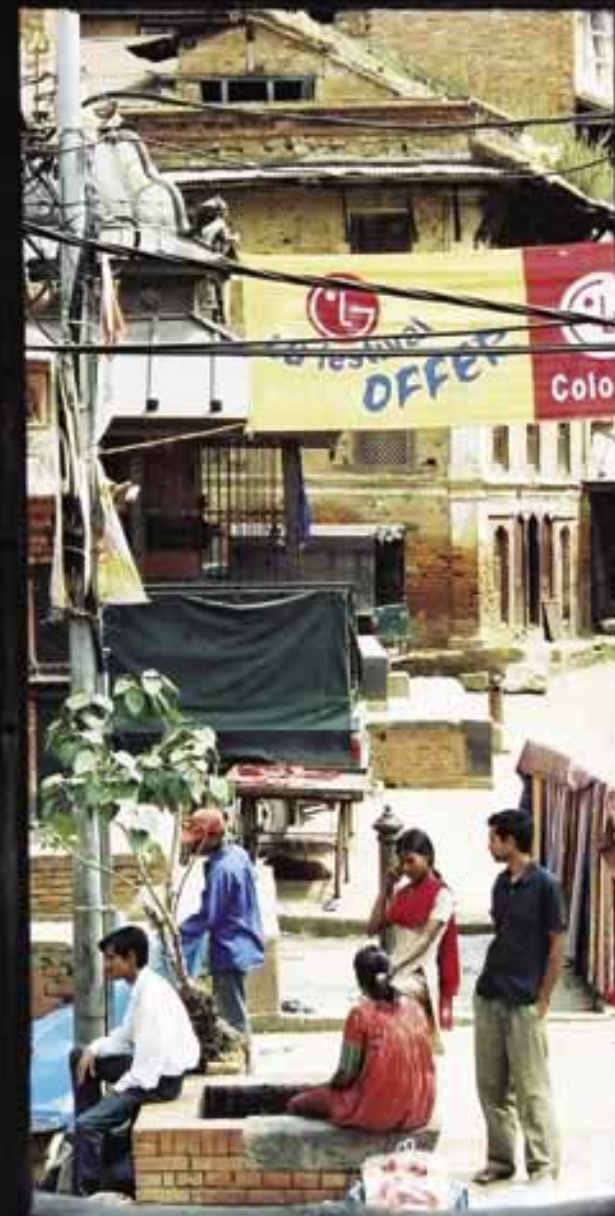
Unfortunately, with the advent of modern plumbing and changes in land use, many traditional water sources are falling into disrepair. Many require immediate conservation in order to protect not only their utilitarian benefit, but also their architectural, cultural and historical significance.

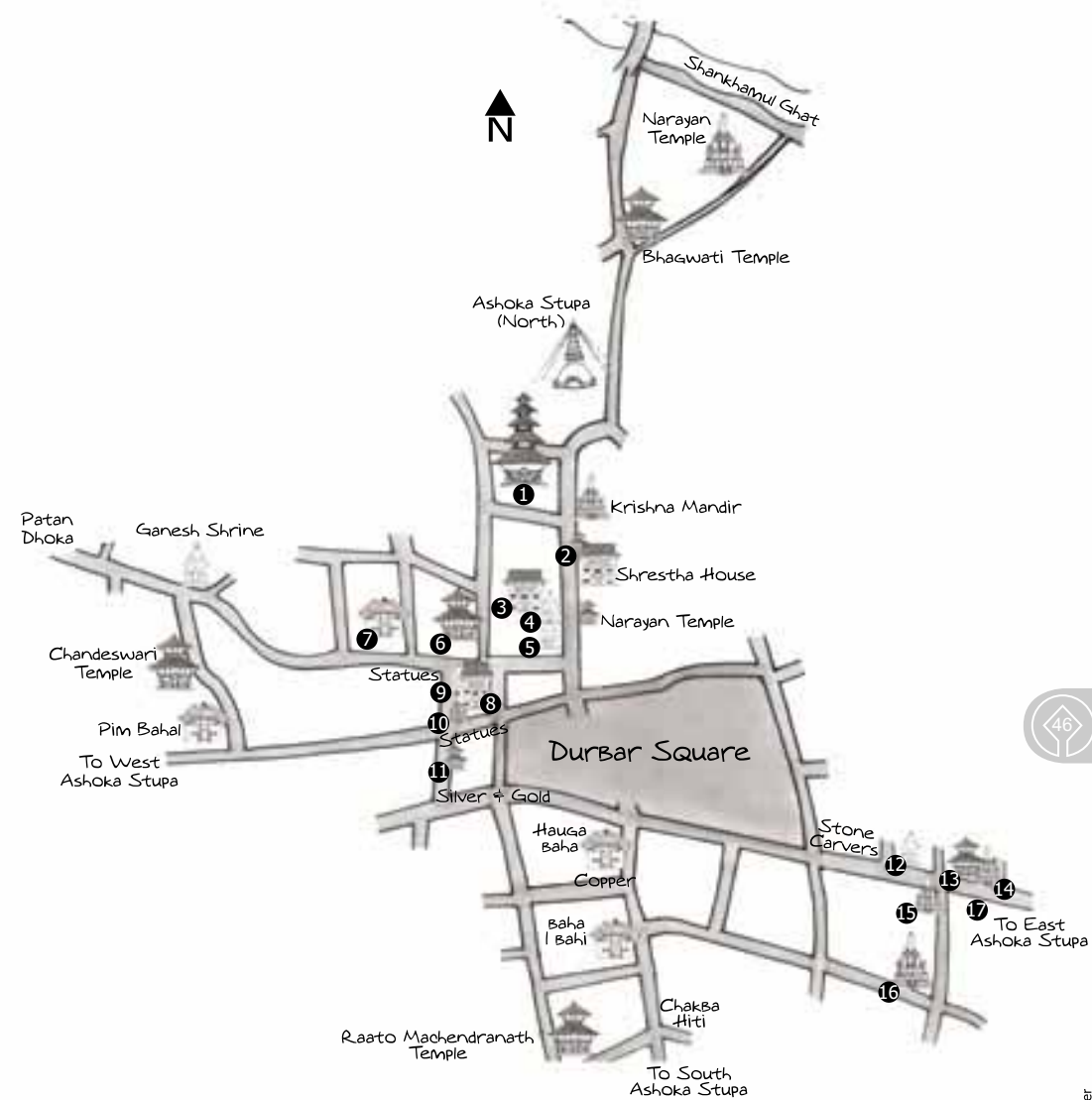




Key

- | | |
|------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. Chyasing Deval | 11. Bhimsen Temple |
| 2. Taleju Bell | 12. Ganesh Temple |
| 3. Hari Shankar Temple | 13. Mangal Hiti |
| 4. Narasingh Temple | 14. Mani Mandapa |
| 5. Yoganendra Pillar | 15. Keshav Narayan Chowk |
| 6. Narayan Temple | 16. Degutale Temple |
| 7. Char Narayan Temple | 17. Taleju Temple |
| 8. Krishna Temple | 18. Mul Chowk |
| 9. Garuda Statue | 19. Sundari Chowk |
| 10. Vishwanath Temple | 20. Bhandarkhal Gardens |





Key

1. Kumbeshwor Temple
2. Uma Maheshwar Temple
3. Yata Chhen Complex
4. Krishna Mandir
5. Krishna Mandir
6. Golden Temple
7. Naga Baha
8. Raj Bhandari House
9. Uma Maheshwar Temple

10. Hari Shankar Temple
11. Laxmi Narayan Temple
12. Shiva Temple
13. Twaya Baha
14. Uma Maheshwar Temple
15. Uma Maheshwar Temple
16. Mahabodhi Temple
17. Sundhara

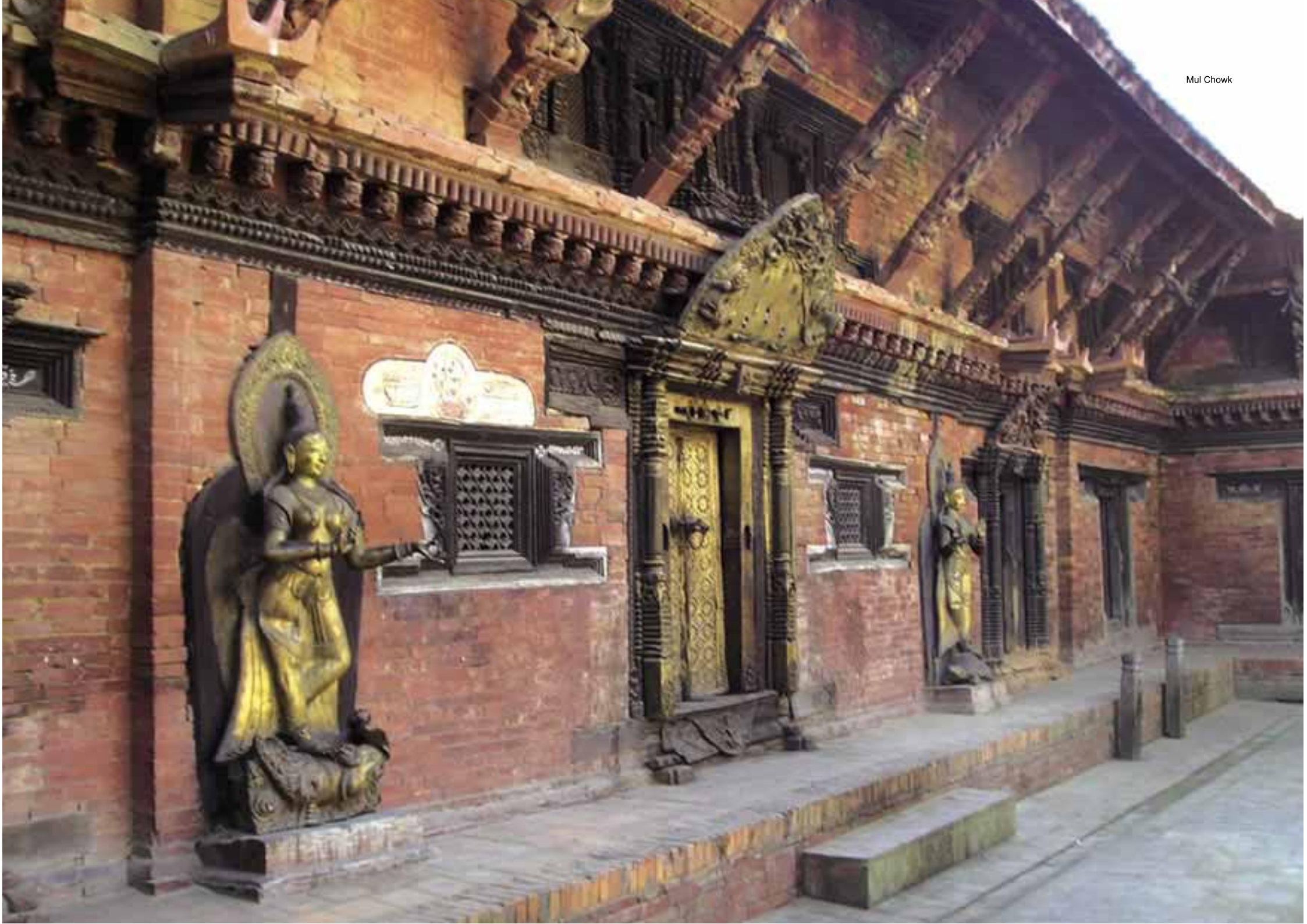


PALACE COMPLEX

The **palace complex** constitutes the entire east side of the Durbar Square. There is little reference to this complex before the 16th century, although the oldest parts must have been established as early as the 12th century. No existing section, however, dates from before the 17th century, but some are standing on foundations almost identical to those of the older structures.

The palace was once known as Chaukot (Four Forts), named after the four cornered forts which stood next to the Mani Dhara. Today, it is known as **Layaku**, which is the old Newari word for palace, or more popularly as the **Patan Durbar**. The buildings took their present form during the reign of King Siddhinarasisingha Malla and his son Shri Nivas (17th century). Since that time the buildings have undergone many changes and today some of the quadrangles have been converted into government offices, a museum and a school.







Ganesh

Ganesh is the son of **Shiva** and **Parvati**. He is one of the Kathmandu Valley's most popular gods and frequently appears at gateways and on door frames as the great clearer of obstacles. Any new venture begins with prayers to the rotund deity, and the Kings of Nepal visit his shrine in Kathmandu soon after their coronation. Ganesh owes his elephant head to his violent father, Shiva, who decapitated him after failing to believe the son was his own. As he repented Shiva promised to replace the severed skull with that of the first animal to pass by - in this case, an elephant. His vehicle is a rat or a shrew.

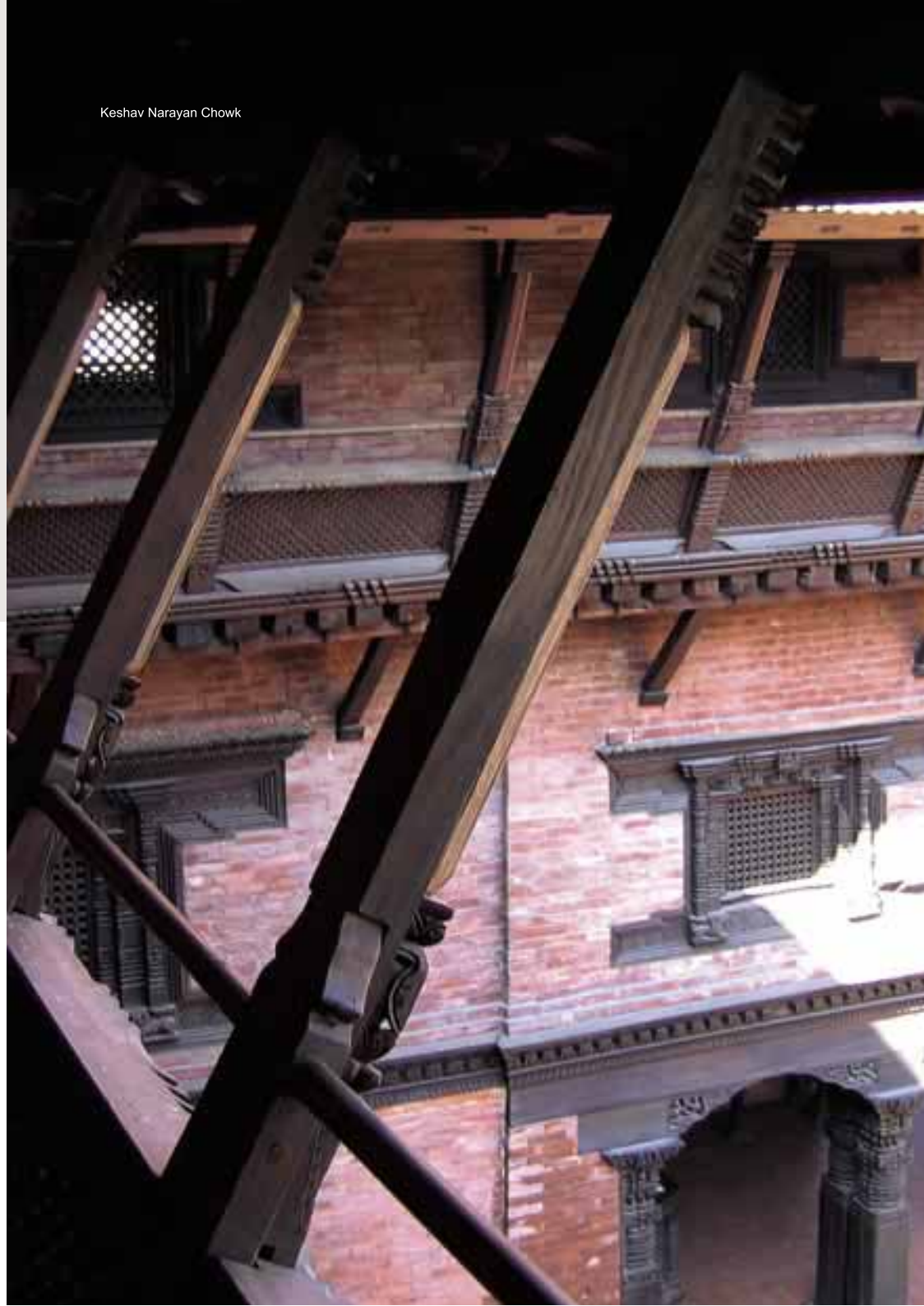
At the southern end of the complex lies **Sundari Chowk**, which translates as 'the beautiful courtyard'. It was constructed by Siddhinarasingha Malla in 1627 to serve as his residence. The gate towards the courtyard is guarded by a large image of Hanuman (the monkey god) and two reliefs of Narasingh and Ganesh.

The small gate leads to a beautiful courtyard within the palace complex embellished with a marvellously carved stone bath. The bath, called the **Tusa Hiti**, was the open air bathing place of the rulers of Patan. It is octagonal in shape, emphasising the devotion the king had for the eight nagas, the goddesses of rain. The entire wall of the bath is adorned with small carved figures in stone and metal representing the favourite

gods of the king, including the ten avatars of Vishnu. The golden spout is adorned with images of Vishnu and Laxmi, the goddess of wealth. The tank itself is a gilded conch shell and the water was transported from the surrounding hills to the courtyard along a network of stone pipes. The bath is surrounded by a pair of sculpted nagas and a miniature shikhara temple. The exquisitely embellished three-tiered building located at the south end of the courtyard used to be the living quarters of Siddhinarasimha Malla and his family.

The **Degutale** temple and the octagonal temple of Taleju can be seen from the street, but they are located inside the **Mul Chowk**. The Mul Chowk was renovated, enlarged and built in its present form by Shri Nivas towards

Keshav Narayan Chowk



the end of the 17th century. The entrance is flanked by stone guardians and in the centre of the Chowk is a shrine dedicated to Yantaju, who is a companion goddess of Taleju. The octagonal **temple of Taleju** is in the north-east corner of the courtyard and was built in 1671. Upon entering the courtyard one comes across a temple dedicated to **Agamdeva**, a secret house-goddess of the Kings of Patan. The temple was commissioned in the late 17th century by the same King as the Taleju Temple across the courtyard. The doors of the temple to the secret deity remain locked and are flanked by almost life-sized statues of the river goddesses Ganga and Yamuna.

Also visible from the Mul Chowk is the temple of **Degutale** which was rebuilt in 1661 by Shri Nivas Malla. The early temple had five roofs, but it was replaced by a square pagoda style structure.

Beyond this courtyard are the **Bhandarkhal** gardens which are closed to visitors. The gardens house a large pond replete with sculptures and spouts.

The **Keshav Narayan Chowk** or the **Patan Museum** lies at the northern extremity of the palace complex. The entrance is invariably flanked by residents of Patan who like to sit on the wall and watch people passing through the square. The Keshav Narayan Chowk is the site where the four-cornered fort stood.

To enter the museum, visitors pass through a golden gate which leads into the courtyard. Above the gate is the famous golden window or the **Lunjhyah**. The **Lunjhyah** bears the image of Buddha and Vishnu, Garuda and other deities. The courtyard of the museum is named after the shrine of Keshav Narayan that stands in the centre. The small whitewashed temple is built on a platform with a central image of a four-armed Vishnu with his discus and club. Keshav Narayan Chowk was renovated and rebuilt primarily during the reign of Shri Nivas Malla in the late 17th century and again during the 19th century. The complex was heavily damaged during the 1934 earthquake and has been thoroughly renovated and converted into a museum.

Next to the Keshav Narayan Chowk is the **Nasal Chowk** which is closed to public. Only a small part is accessible and now houses a shop.





Patan Museum

Upon entering the courtyard one comes across signs which read 'Restoration of Patan's former palace and its adaptation to a museum 1982-1987. A joint project of the Governments of Austria and Nepal'. The courtyard was revived and transformed into Nepal's premier museum as part of this bi-lateral conservation programme.

The entrance to the museum is at the back of the first courtyard, which doubles as a temporary exhibition space. The museum itself is housed in multiple airy galleries filled with statues and stone inscriptions. Access to the first galleries is up a steep staircase which exemplifies the innovative combination of modern materials such as steel beams, and traditional wood and brick.

The museum's exhibits comprehensively introduce the visitor to Nepal's artistic history and the labels provide concise and well considered background information. From a permanent collection of over 1,500 objects 200 are currently on view, the majority of which are bronze or repousse work. Nearly all were produced in the Kathmandu Valley, and many were made in the streets of Patan itself. The exhibition gives a good overview of Hindu and Buddhist art and iconography. It is set up in such a way that is particularly appealing for people without extensive knowledge of the subject, providing a basic understanding, which will facilitate further visits of the historic sites of the Kathmandu Valley.





KWA BAH "THE GOLDEN TEMPLE"

Kwa Baha, popularly known as the Golden Temple or as Hiranyavarna Mahavihar, dates back to 1045 A.D and the reign of King Bhaskara Deva Varma. Kwa Baha is also known as Suvarna Vihar and is one of the most vibrant and embellished temples in Nepal.

Although significant donations were received since the 15th century, the lavish decoration was created in the early 20th century after two competing families became rich through trade activities with Tibet. One family gilded the lower roofs and the second paid the embellishment of the third roof. The Prime Minister then interceded and declared that the Kwa Baha had enough roofs and

donations have since then focussed on other sections of the complex.

The gate is guarded by two huge stone lions and is painted with images of Bhairav. There is a reception office and beyond lies the main courtyard which houses the principle shrine where Shakyamuni Buddha is worshipped. His shrine lies directly opposite the main entrance.

The Golden Temple is a three-stage structure covered with gilt copper. Over the door is a solid silver torana which is a replica of the gilded-copper torana over the doorway leading to the courtyard. Buddha occupies the centre and is attended by his followers on either side. Above the torana there are figures of the Pancha Buddhas and above them figures of Tara, the female Bodhisattva of compassion. Scenes depicting the life of Buddha decorate



Golden temple

Baha and Bahi

A Buddhist monastery in the Newar context is called a Vihara. This encompasses two basic types of buildings: Baha and Bahi (Bahal and Bahil in Nepali).

Viharas have a square plan and are built around an interior courtyard. The street facades are modest, and many visitors walk by without even noticing.

The facade of the **Bahi** is completely sealed off from the outside, except from a small, centrally placed entrance door. This door leads to the central courtyard, which is surrounded by open galleries on all four sides. Opposite the entrance, at the other side of the courtyard, is the main shrine. In the case of a Bahi, the shrine is free standing and has a circumambulatory passage around it. The shrine itself is a simple small room which houses the main deity. Left from the main entrance, there is a single staircase leading to the upper level, which is a large open space used for religious services. Bahi are generally found throughout the countryside, and are less common in urban areas.

The **Baha** is the most common of the Vihara type. This is the structure found throughout the historic cities of the Valley. With over 140 examples, Patan is home to most Bahas. A Baha is constructed around a sunken courtyard, surrounded by arcades. In contrast to the Bahi, the ground level and upper floors are subdivided into smaller rooms. The entrance to the Baha is more visible, as the main gate is guarded by lions on both sides and is surmounted by a decorated torana. The central shrine is opposite the entrance, but is part of the building complex instead of free-standing. In each corner of the complex is a stairway leading to the rooms on the upper levels.

the main shrine and the first two roofs are supported by carved struts. Many small gilded faces line the edge of the roof and survey the courtyard below.

In front of the primary entrance to the shrine is a vajra (thunder-bolt symbol) on a circular base. The secondary shrine in the courtyard is dedicated to Swayambhu and Vasuki, the King of the Nagas, with four doors surmounted by toranas enclosing a chaitya (stupa). This veneration of Swayambhu goes back to the time where the Kathmandu Valley was still a lake and the Buddha manifested himself as an eternal flame in the location where at present the Swayambhu stupa stands. All the four corners of the shrine are adorned with leogryphs made of bronze. On either side of the entrance are kneeling followers and in front is a dharmadhatu (mandala) surmounted by a vajra. The dharmadhatu is dedicated to Manjushri, the Bodhisattva of Wisdom.

On the floor of the courtyard, in the North-East corner, is a carved lotus where the monks are initiated before they become members of the surrounding monasteries.

There are many chapels on the ground floor of the Kwa Baha: towards the left of the main shrine there is the chapel to Tara, and towards the right, a chapel dedicated to the Tantric deity Vajrasattva. Next to the reception room is a chapel dedicated to Namasangiti (a form of Avalokitesvara, the Bodhisattva of Compassion). The courtyard leads to an open space where there is a well and a chaitya.



Golden temple

Swotha Square





Kumbheswor temple

KUMBHESWOR

The Kumbheswor complex is situated North of the Durbar Square. The **Kumbheswor Temple** is a very important Hindu site and is one of only two five-roofed temples in the Kathmandu valley (the other is the Nyatapola in Bhaktapur). The original temple of Kumbheswor dates back to 1392, when it was built during the reign of King Jayastithi Malla.



Kumbheswor temple



There are two water hitis in front of the main entrance and the small square in front of the temple complex is generally filled with stands selling offerings and butter lamps.

Having entered the complex, one comes across a Nandi bull lying in front the main temple doorway. This gilded bull is the mount of Shiva. The original was donated by King Jaya Vishnu in 1735, but was later stolen, and finally replaced by pious worshippers.

On either side of the bull, stone lions guard the entrance to the shrine. There are doors on all four sides of the temple and it is encircled by a circumambulatory passage for the worshippers. The shrine of the Kumbheswor temple houses a Shiva lingam and the roofs are supported by heavily carved wooden struts depicting deities.

To the left of the courtyard is a water tank with a stone serpent or Naga adorning the inner wall. This is reputed to be the tank where Mani Jogini, the ugly grass cutter, slaked his thirst and was transformed into the beautiful Lalit. The tank is filled by a natural spring that is enclosed in a structure next to it.

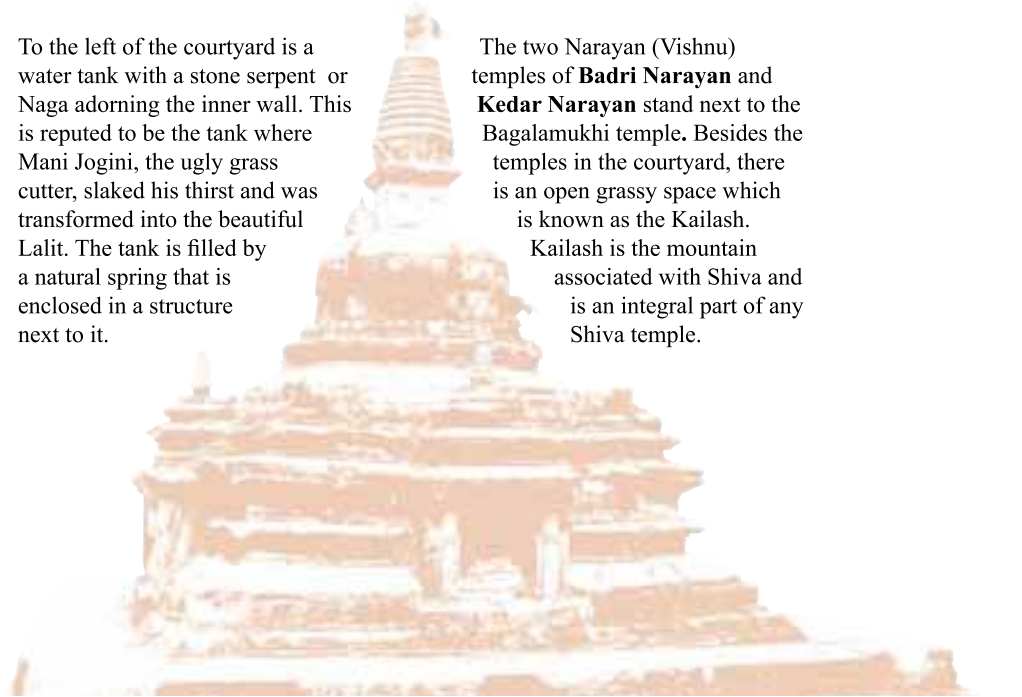
Behind the temple, and opposite the primary entrance, is a two storey meeting house or sattal, which stands next to a more recent temple dedicated to **Harati Ma**, the goddess of small pox. This temple was built in 1991 and is very popular among the locals who bring their children to the temple to protect them against diseases.

Past the Harati temple are the shrines of Lalitadevi represented by 11 stones, and Manakamana Devi who is represented by a single stone. A very old temple is dedicated to elephant-headed Ganesh and features a sunken bull in front of it (near the Lalitadevi and Manakamana devi shrines).

Towards the right of the main temple, in the south of the compound, is the long single storey temple of the goddess **Bagalamukhi**. The goddess is again represented by a stone and her shrine is covered with silver.

The two Narayan (Vishnu) temples of **Badri Narayan** and **Kedar Narayan** stand next to the Bagalamukhi temple. Besides the temples in the courtyard, there is an open grassy space which is known as the Kailash.

Kailash is the mountain associated with Shiva and is an integral part of any Shiva temple.







ASHOKA STUPAS

The historic town of Patan was built on a crossroad of the routes leading to the four Ashoka stupas which were built in each of the cardinal directions. The Durbar Square was created at the intersection of these roads. Today, the town has grown and the stupas which were once surrounded by fields, are now very much part of Patan's urban fabric. However, the historic pattern of the main streets leading to these stupas and intersecting at the Durbar Square, can still be easily traced.

North Ashoka Stupa



Legend dictates that the stupas in Lagankhel (south), Pulchowk (west), I Bahi (north) and Teta (east) were built by **Ashoka**, the famous Mauryan Emperor of India. The well-traveled leader ruled the entire subcontinent in the 3rd century BC until his death in 232 BC. Emperor Ashoka converted to Buddhism thanks to the persuasion of his wife, and together they spread the religion all over Asia. Two of their children were sent to Sri Lanka to spread the word, and teachers and monks were dispersed across nations to teach the word of Buddha. It is said that while traveling in Nepal with his teacher, wife and daughter he visited the area of Patan on a pilgrimage and built the set of four stupas. The second version of this account states that Ashoka's daughter, Charumati, decided to wed and make her home in Nepal. Charumati and her husband then established the city of Deopatan near the Pashupati Temple and built the Charumati Bihar near Chabahil.

Three of the four 'Ashoka' stupas in the Patan area are built in the same manner, made up of a grassed mound built on a low circular base. The only structure that differs is the one at I Bahi, which has a plastered surface instead of an earthen mound. Its finial is similar to that of Swayambhu. All the stupas have been renovated at least once and there have been additions such as images of the Pancha Buddhas in the niches.



West Ashoka Stupa



METAL WORKERS AND THEIR CRAFT

Patan is known as the city of arts, and today the numerous winding streets of the town are still lined with shops that bear witness to the high quality of local craftsmanship. Wandering around the streets south and west of the Durbar Square, one comes across rows of shops filled with copper, brass and bronze-ware. These shops are the continuation of generations of craftsmanship and the trade in metal objects, which made the Kathmandu Valley, and particularly Patan, famous throughout the region.

According to the Newar caste system, specific groups of the population are linked to distinct occupations. The caste of the Tamrakars or Tamots were traditionally the metal workers (Tama means copper and Akar means 'to give shape'). Often the names of the metalware shops still refer to this caste.

Metalwork, especially in copper and brass, is used for a variety of purposes and is made using different techniques.

Medicinal

Copper is believed to be beneficial for the health. Many copper bracelets in repousse work can be found, as well as numerous items used in the kitchen such as water vessels. The metal is thought to lower blood pressure and to minimize reumatic pains.

Architecture

Metal items have an important role in everyday life and religion within the Valley. Intricately decorated toranas above the doorways of the temples, doorpanels and the patakas, that can be seen flowing down from the temple roofs, are just some examples of the use of repousse work – often in copper - in the architecture of the Valley. The Golden Temple or the Mul Chowk courtyard in Patan are replete with examples.

Worship

The shops in Patan are piled high with copper paraphernalia, each item having a specific use for worship. There are small vessels used for offering water (bhumbha), vessels for offering rice (pauwahi), incense holders, and of course prayer wheels, all used by Patan's largely Buddhist community.

For the Hindu community there are metal lamp holders or panas, different containers for holding puja items (kalaha and kotaha) and hanging oil lamps (khadelu).

Kitchenware

Similar copper items used to be the most common kitchenware in the Valley. Today, because of the high price of metal and the availability of cheaper imported products, their use is limited. However, the creative craftsmen have found a way to develop new copper items adapted to a modern market and a growing demand for traditional style items.





Golden Gate to
Patan Museum

Washing basins and even bathtubs are being made, along with water filters and sophisticated cooking ware.

Statues

The shops west of the Durbar Square display a wide range of statues, mainly of Hindu and Buddhist deities. These statues are made using the lost wax technique. The object is first moulded in wax and then covered in a mantle of clay, leaving some small openings. After the clay has dried, molten metal is poured into the mantle causing the wax to melt and escape through the small openings. After cooling, the clay mantle is broken and the statue is touched up by the artisan.

Idols were traditionally made in copper, but later the use of brass became more popular. Brass is an amalgamation of 90% copper and 10% zinc, also known as commercial bronze and the shift was mainly due to economic reasons, copper being more expensive than zinc. However, only the Hindu statues are made in brass. For Buddhist deities or items such as prayer wheels, copper or gold is used.



STONE CARVING

When tracing the history of Nepal it is best to start looking at the stone carving. Few manuscripts have survived from the early days and the oral tradition does not do justice to the ancient culture. Wooden images from before the 17th century have generally not been well preserved and metal work barely exists from before the 10th century. Stone objects, such as stupas, pillars, inscriptions, water spouts, lions, griffins and gods are visible in all corners of the Valley and have a rich and fascinating story to tell.



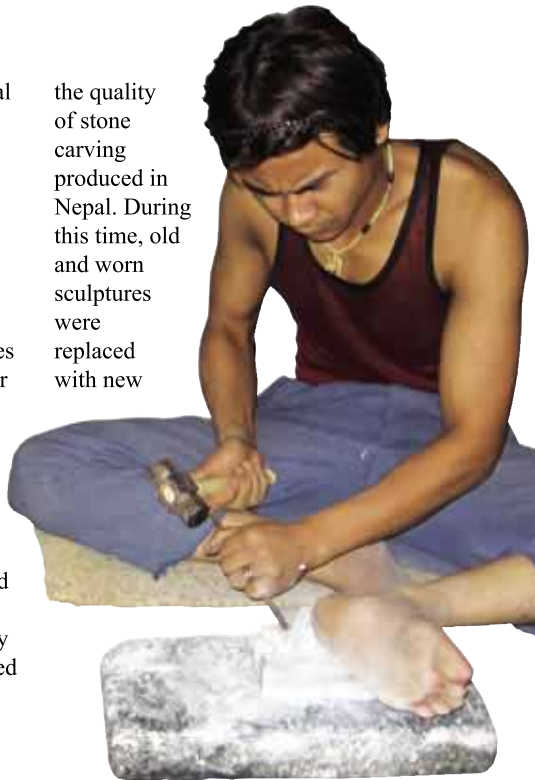
The oldest stone image found in Nepal is that of the Yaksha Bodhisattva, which dates back to the 1st century AD and is preserved in the National Museum in Kathmandu.

Towards the end of the 4th century, craftsmen in Nepal began developing their own style. The earlier bulky forms were replaced by stylized curves and sophisticated artistry, allowing for the stone sculpture to develop in size and refinement.

During the Licchavi period styles from the North, and later the East of India influenced the carvers of Nepal. The Licchavi kings contributed much to the growth of the stone art form and by the end of the 5th century the sculptures began showing increased finesse. During King Amsuvarma's reign (7th century), stone sculpting became highly developed.

Between the Licchavi reign and the rise of the Malla rulers (879-1200) there was a decline in

the quality of stone carving produced in Nepal. During this time, old and worn sculptures were replaced with new



carvings. With the dawn of the Malla age in the 13th century, stone sculpting blossomed once again. The increasingly popular tantric manuscripts inspired the carving of deities and many older sculptures were recovered, restored and re-installed in important locations. Much in the same way that European cities battled to out-do one another by building increasingly

elaborate Cathedrals in the middle ages, the three Malla kings of Kathmandu, Bhaktapur, and Patan competed to create ever more beautiful palaces and temples. The carvers themselves were occasionally victims of their own success as they were known to have had hands removed after completing particularly stunning sculptures. The Malla Kings feared their most prized artisans might be lured away to a rival city to recreate the works.

Legend has it that King Bhupatindra Malla had the right hand of Ugracandadevi (1707) amputated after he saw an exquisite work by the carver. The determined artist persevered and went on to carve a stunning image of Bhairava with his left hand, which prompted the King to remove the second limb. The remarkable Ugracandadevi is said to have proceeded to carve yet another exquisite piece of art using only his feet.

The Shakyas are the traditional stone-carving caste and knowledge is passed from father to son. After the fall of the Mallas, there was no real demand for stone carving until the present era when many stone carvers are busy once again. Granite, sandstone and marble is transported from the Dakshinkali, Godavari and Hattiban quarries and is transformed into intricate works of art using only primitive tools. The numerous small studios, usually located on the ground floor of traditional buildings in the backstreets of Patan, Bhaktapur and Kathmandu, should be visited by anyone interested in this ancient craft.





FESTIVALS

by Shanti Mishra

Nepal is known to foreigners as a land of fascinating festival probably unmatched anywhere else in the world. Nepalese celebrate more festivals than there are days in a year. Festivals come one after another almost everyday or every week. They are celebrated according to the lunar calendar and therefore they do not occur on the same date from one year to the other. The every full moon day (the 15th day of the lunar month) has special significance. The lifestyle of the smiling Nepalese people is uniquely interwoven with religious culture and rituals and there are full of entertainment provided by the numerous accompanying festivals. For them festivals are not merely spectacles but a celebration of their glorious cultural heritage. Festivals unite together people of diverse cultural background and faith into one nation. Besides, Gods and Goddesses, the worshipping during some festivals is in honour of the earth, sun, moon, rivers, plants, tools and weapons, snakes, dogs, cow, mother, father, brother and practically everything.





Some festivals, such as Dasain and Tihar, are celebrated throughout the country. Some are celebrated only in the cities. These include Indra Jatra in Kathmandu, Rato Machhendranath jatra in Patan and Bisket Jatra in Bhaktapur. Some are celebrated only in one village; Hari Shankar jatra in Pharping, Adinath jatra in Chobhar and Maha-Laxmi jatra in Thankot. The festivals which are centered on Patan Durbar Square are:

Name	Month of Celebration
Rato Machhendranath jatra	Baisakh (Apr/May)
Jyapunhi	Jestha (May/Jun)
Kumbheswar Mela	Shrawan (Jul/Aug)
Mataya	Shrawan (Jul/Aug)
Krishna Jayanti	Shrawan (Jul/Aug)
Bhimsen Jatra	Bhadra (Aug/Sep)
Mulchok festival	Asoj (Sep/Oct)
Kumari Puja	Asoj (Sep/Oct)
Kartik Naach	Kartik (Oct/Nov)

Rato Machhendranath Jatra (Baisakh/April-May)

This jatra is celebrated in honor of the God Rato Machhendranath. The festival is one of the most spectacular held in Patan. It starts by enshrining Rato (red) Machhendranath – the guardian god of Kathmandu valley, the god of rain and harvest - in the artistically decorated chamber of the ‘rath’ (chariot), which is surmounted by a 50 foot long pole covered with evergreen boughs – Nepal’s most spectacular chariot. The Rath jatra (pulling of the chariot) starts from Pulchowk on the fourth of Baisakh (April/May) and lasts months. During this time the rath is pulled through the main streets of Patan followed by the smaller rath of Minnath, known also as Chakuba Deo. Both are accompanied by traditional music and stop at set places where local people gather to offer puja (worship). During the festival, Patan is festive and jubilant with rejoicing people. Finally the raths reach their destination at Jawlakhel, close to the zoo where the jatra ends with the display of the Bhoto (vest) amid a big crowd of people including the Patan living goddess Kumari, the King, Queen other dignitaries. It is another great event for foreigners to witness.

Jyapunhi (Jestha/May-June)

Jyapunhi is one of the notable historical festivals of Patan, celebrated on the full moon day of Jestha in front of the Krishna Mandir (temple) in Patan Durbar Square. On the occasion, the 338 year old golden throne of King Shri Niwas Malla is displayed, along with Pauba arts preserved

since King Siddhinarsingha Malla's time. Religious songs composed by King Siddhinarsingha Malla in praise of Krishna are sung by a group of devotees accompanied by classical instruments.

Kumbheswar Mela (Shrawan/July-August)

Kumbheswar Mela falls on the full moon day of Shrawan (July/August). It is also known as Janai Purnima, and is based on an historical event. This spectacular festival was initiated by King Pratap Malla to console his grief-stricken Queen Bha Laxmi on the death of their son by showing her that it was not only they who were grieving. A mela (festival) is held annually at the Kumbheswar temple of Shiva, built during the rule of King Pratap Malla, and located north of Patan Durbar Square. Devotees come in their hundreds to take a holy bath in the Pokhari (pond), believing that its water came from the holy Gosain Kunda, a sacred lake situated at an altitude of 4,360 meters in the Langtang range of the Himalayas. A pageant of Jhakaries (traditional healers) dressed in their traditional attire also takes place. They come to take holy baths in order to receive blessings from Shiva to become more powerful healers. A special food called kwaati made of nine different cereals is prepared in every Nepali home for lunch.

Mattaya (Shrawan/July-August)

Mattaya is one of the festivals held annually only in Patan. It is held a day after Gaijatra (Festival of the Cow). Devotees, who are mainly Buddhists, gather at a fixed Vihar early in the

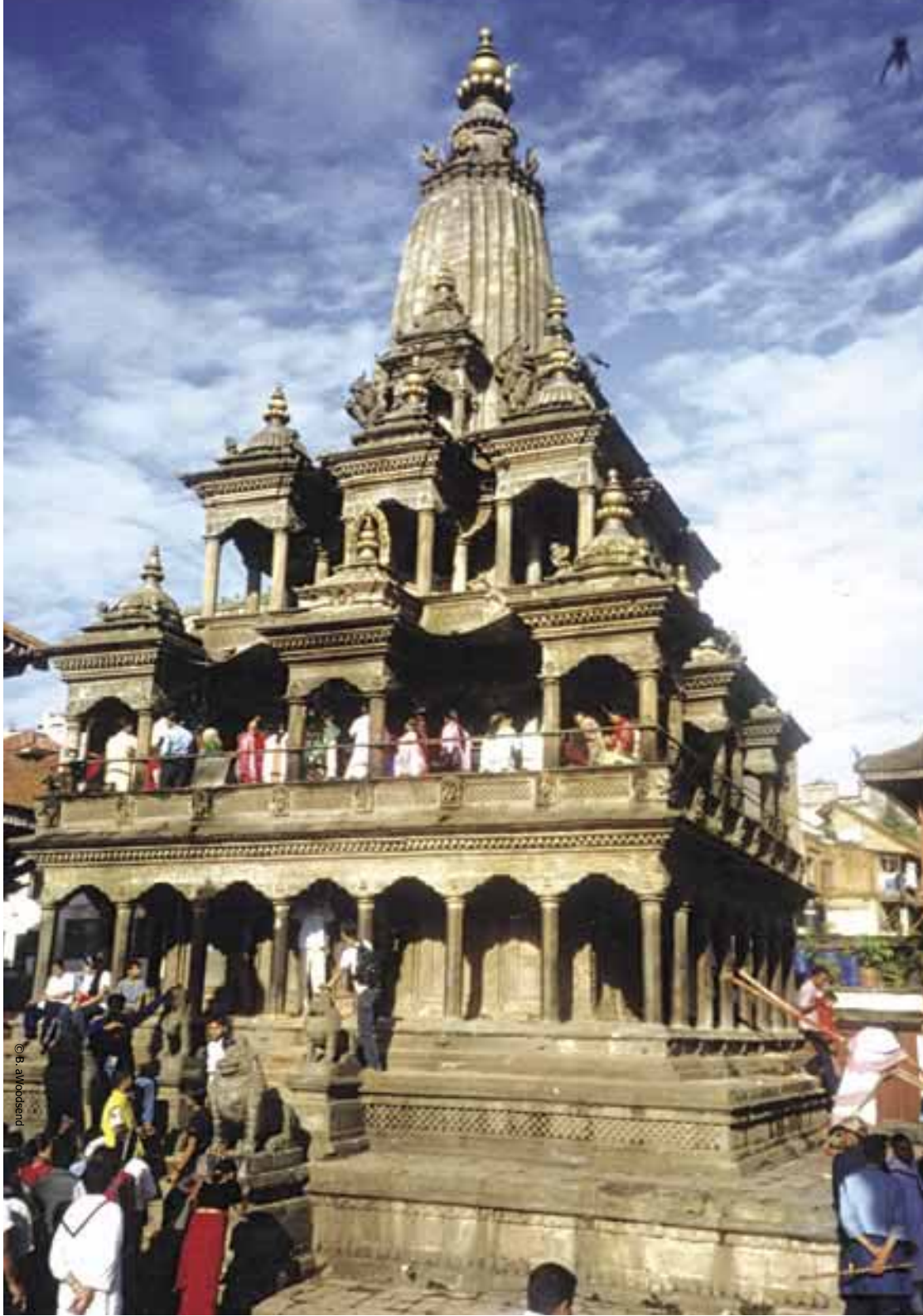
morning to go in procession to all the other Buddhist religious sites. They cherish the memory of the Buddha Mattaya (mattaya means light in Newari), and the memory of their deceased family members. They carry large torches made from white cloth soaked in oil for two days during their visit to the Viharas, where old thangkas (scroll paintings), images, manuscripts, and other Buddhist materials are displayed. They offer flowers, grains, coins and other ritual items at the shrines as they pass by. Some devotees wear beautiful dresses specially made for the occasion. Traditional musical bands also take part in the procession. It is important for the people of Patan to participate in the Mattaya at least once in their lifetime.

Krishna Jayanti (Shrawan/July-August)

Krishna Jayanti is celebrated to commemorate the birthday of Krishna, the hero of the great Hindu epic Mahabharata. The fascinating stories of Krishna's miraculous birth, fabulous childhood, never ending romance with hundreds and hundreds of Gopinis (women devotees) and many deeds of valour have sunk deep into the imagination and hearts of Hindus.

This occasion is celebrated with great devotion. Krishna temples are visited and photos depicting the stories are displayed in different localities. There are many temples dedicated to Krishna and his consort Radha in the Kathmandu Valley. The most famous temple made of blackstone with 21 shrines is situated at the Durbar Square, Patan. Important scenes from the Ramayana and Mahabharata have





been engraved beautifully. The Krishna Mandir (temple) was built by Newar King Siddhinarsingha Malla in the 17th century. During Krishna Jayanti devotees gather around the temple to offer worship. Women folk from different places throng the Mandir singing, dancing and burning oil lamps to attain Krishna's blessings.

Bhimsen Jatra

(Bhadra/August-September)

This festival is celebrated in Patan Durbar Square in honour of Bhimsen, god of the business community. Bhimsen is regarded as the symbol of strength and bravery and is one of the heroes of the Mahabharata. His temple in Patan Durbar Square is located north of Krishna Mandir and two days after Krishna's birthday, Bhimsen is carried out in a three-tiered khat (palanquin) and paraded through the main streets of Patan.

Mulchok Festival

(Asoj/September-October)

This festival is held during Dasain from Ghatasthapana to Kojagrat Purnima (full moon) in the Mulchowk (courtyard) in Patan Durbar Square. On this occasion, the Astamatrika Dance is performed with classical music, and animals are sacrificed by slitting their throats. On Vijaya Dashami day, Nava Durga Bhavani are also brought from Thecho (a village in the south of Patan) to perform the spectacular traditional masked dance.

Kumari Puja

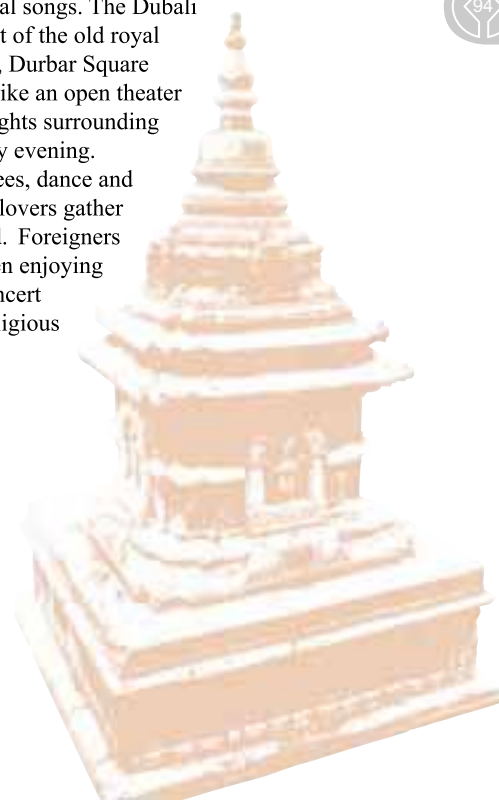
(Asoj – September/October)

Kumari Puja is held on the tenth day of Dasain in the Mulchowk in Patan Durbar Square, in honour of the Kumaris. On this occasion, 12 Kumaris including the Chief Kumari are brought to the palace from different localities of Patan and are worshipped by devotees.


Kartik Naach

(Kartik – October/November)

Kartik Naach is a traditional masked dance held annually at the Dubali (platform) Patan Durbar Square in the month of Kartik (October/November). The Kartik Naach was initiated by King Siddhinarsingha Malla 366 years ago. This masked dance representing gods and goddesses lasts for a week and is accompanied by classical songs. The Dubali in front of the old royal palace, Durbar Square looks like an open theater with lights surrounding it every evening. Devotees, dance and music lovers gather around. Foreigners are seen enjoying the concert and religious drama.







THE SHRESTHA AND RAJBHANDARI HOUSES

The Shrestha House or Newa Chen is a beautifully preserved traditional Newari home that lines three sides of a spacious courtyard. With the help of the Patan Tourism Development Organisation (PTDO) and funding from the National Federation of UNESCO Associations of Japan (NFUAJ), the family that has lived in the house for generations devised a way to restore it and turn it into a viable commercial enterprise. The solution was simple: they converted the traditional space into comfortable guest accommodation, complete with en suite bathrooms and elegant tailor made furniture. The open plan public rooms overlook the central courtyard and are light and airy.

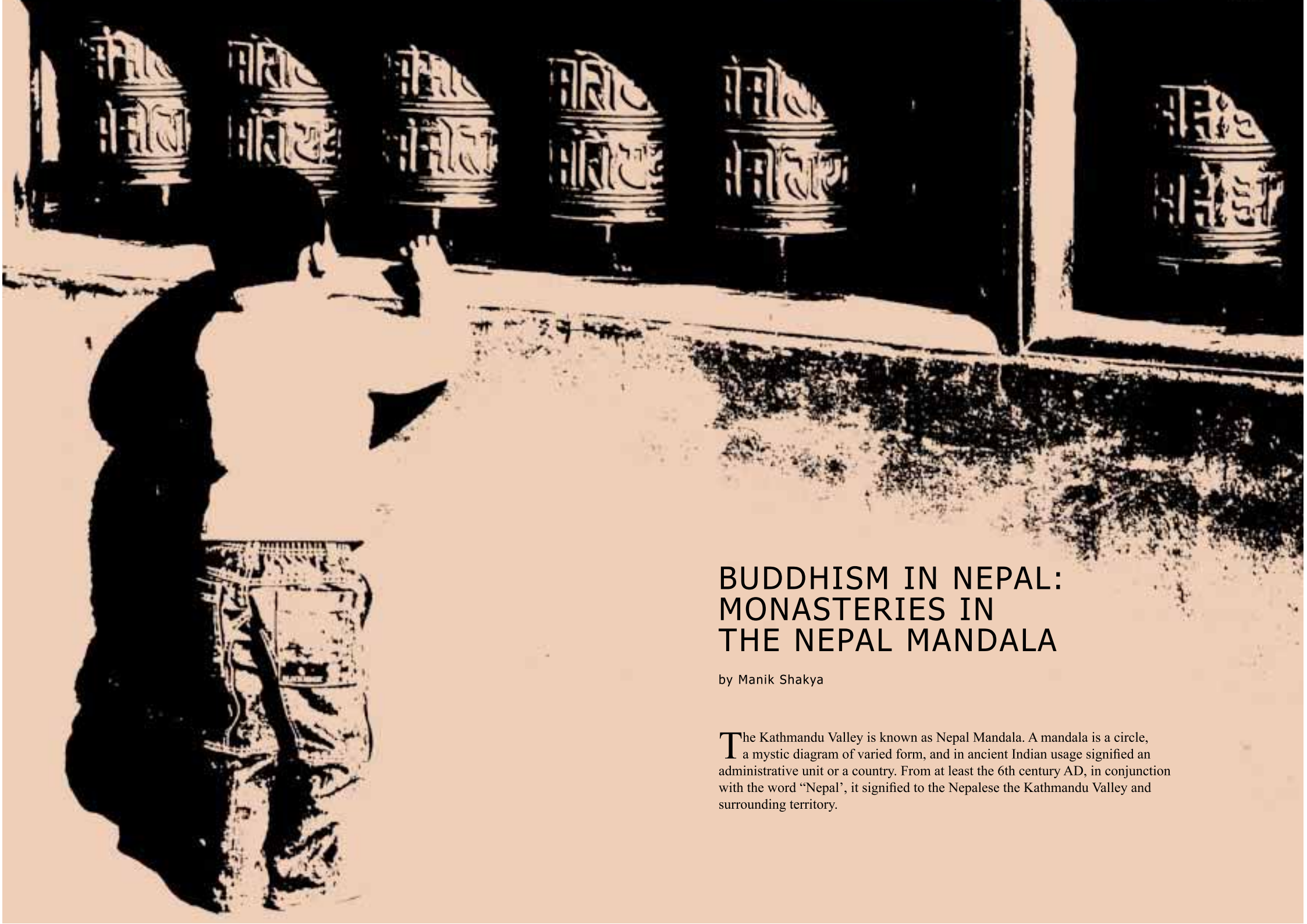
The **Shrestha House** is located in the at Kulimha Tol, about 200 meters north of Patan Durbar Square and is open for visitors and guests alike. It provides a rare opportunity to experience the inside of a traditional Malla era family house in the heart of Patan.

Another interesting property to visit in the area is the **Rajbhandari House** in Kwalkhu Tol, Patan. Its upper floors have been converted into long-term residential units and a restaurant and a crafts outlet are open to visitors on the ground level. The traditional small rooms were enlarged by removing some of the internal walls and the ceiling height was increased significantly by replacing the mud floors with wooden planking. The Garden at the back of the house is a calm oasis and an ideal place to catch your breath whilst exploring the back streets of Patan.



Rajbhandari House

© Rohit Ranjitkar



BUDDHISM IN NEPAL: MONASTERIES IN THE NEPAL MANDALA

by Manik Shakya

The Kathmandu Valley is known as Nepal Mandala. A mandala is a circle, a mystic diagram of varied form, and in ancient Indian usage signified an administrative unit or a country. From at least the 6th century AD, in conjunction with the word “Nepal”, it signified to the Nepalese the Kathmandu Valley and surrounding territory.

The Valley itself measures about 24 km in length by 19 km in width and is surrounded by forested hills. The Nepal Mandala of the present day Kathmandu Valley is a living tradition of unique Buddhist Art and Architecture. It is also an aspect of intangible heritage that has developed in a definite geographical location and is shared by the majority of people in the Valley.

The People of Nepal have called the Kathmandu Valley 'Nepal Mandala' since the pre-Lichhavi era, and it is referred to as such in an inscription written during the reign of Jayadeva. The Nepal Mandala has significance for both Buddhists and Hindus and it is an important place from the point of view of vihar (monastery) Architecture. There are a number of medieval Buddhist monuments in the form of monasteries or viharas- known locally as Bahal, in the Nepal Mandala. These monasteries are living proof of the flourishing of Buddhist architecture since the medieval times. Although in the medieval period the monasteries were used by celibate monks, at present they are inhabited by the descendants of the monks who have returned to a common life, and are of the Vajracharya and Shakya castes. The Bahal were constructed on the basis of the Krisamgraha Panjika, a Buddhist text compiled by Kuldatta around the 13th century. A stone slab beside the entrance to Pimche Bahal, a vihar quadrangle built in Kathmandu in the 16th century, specifies that it was built in accordance with the text, and manuscript copies still exist in Nepal.



In the geographical area covered by the Nepal Mandala, approximately 200 monasteries exist at present, some of which are in good condition such as Hiranya Varna Mahavihar, Rudravarna Mahavihar of Lalitpur, Gunakar Mahavihar of Kathmandu and the Thathu Bahi of Bhaktapur. The features of a Nepal Mandala Bahal are as follows:

Ground floor

According to the Kriyasamgraha, the foundations of the quadrangular monasteries are permeated with the Vajra Dhatu Mandala, and special arrangements are devised for the gods. Before starting construction, the gods need to be worshipped. After completing the worship, construction can commence. According to a second Buddhist text, written in the Newari language, the quadrangle shape is the ideal from an architectural point of view. With the exception for the doorways in the

front façade, the ground floor is totally sealed off from the outside world, and the open porticos face inwards overlooking the courtyards.

Entrance

In the majority of the monasteries the entrance is at ground level, facing north-east, and the stone door is flanked by 2 stone lions. The stone beam of the entrance is called khalu in Newari. It is believed that anyone who crosses the khalu is instantly purified. Inside the entrance there are usually waiting places which were used for conducting interviews with visitors. Nowadays they are also used for chanting and Hymn recitation.

Courtyard

The Monastery building usually rests on a low plinth-like base. The courtyard is sunken except for a narrow walkway around it, and the rooms are set around the courtyard. In the courtyard a chaitya is constructed. In addition other religious items like prayer wheels and incense burners are also located here.

Chaitya

Chaitya are essential features of every monastery. Each monastic courtyard contains at least one chaitya in the center. Most are built of stone and they vary in size. They are often referred to as Ashoka Chaitya as there is a popular belief that they were erected by the emperor Ashoka who is said to have constructed 84,000 stupas containing Buddha's remains. Most of the monasteries also have one votive chaitya that was erected by members of the sangha or by lay people, in memory of the deceased and ancestors. In the tradition of the Buddha Shakyamuni, all chaityas represent the transcendental form and are thus the focus of public worship. It is believed that the establishment of chaitya brings merit.

Mandala

Every monastery of the Nepal Mandala contains a mandala which is made of stone or repousse metalwork molded onto a stone base. The Mandala featured here is called Dharma Dhatu Mandala and is Tantric with the central figure of Manjughosa, a form of Manjushri, considered to be of the family of Vajrasattva.

Agam (esoteric room)

The Agam is usually a separate attic room that is kept closed and locked. It may contain an image or symbol of a lineage deity, various other images and sacred objects. The highest Tantric deities like Chakra Sambar and Vajradevi are seated in the agam and only a few members of the sangha are permitted to enter. Vajrayani tantric rituals are performed in this room. It is believed that the Tantric tradition

began in the Nepal Mandala in the 12th century, and has since become widespread, with Tantric images being established in every bahal.

Torana or Tympanum

A torana is an essential part of the bahal and is located above the entrance. It is usually a semi-circle of carved wood or repousse metalwork that represents the image of the main shrine and provides an insight into the activities of the individual bahal. In the Buddhist tradition, representatives of Buddha, Dharma and Sangha are all depicted in the torana.

Strut

The roof, with its border of wood, clay and tiles and its wide projecting eaves, is very heavy. It is supported by carved wooden struts known as tudanl in Newari. They are set at a 45 degree angle and are braced between the roof, beams and brick cornice, or individually against slightly projected beam ends. In quadrangles, corner tudanls longer and larger than the others support the most extensive overhangs of the roofs.

Pinnacle

Pinnacles of Buddhist Monasteries are made in the shape of kalash (ritual water or flower pots) and chaitya, thus they are symbols of wisdom. Pinnacles are established at end of the construction on an auspicious day. In the Buddhist monasteries of Nepal Mandala odd numbers (typically 3, 5, 7) of metal pinnacles are established.



KINGS & RULERS OF NEPAL

Pre-Historic 1 or Gopala Period

Before 700 BC

The period lasted for 521 years and the dynasty had 7 Kings
First King – Bhuktaman

Pre-Historic 2 or Kirata Period

c. 700 BC – 78 AD

There were 29 kings of the Kirata dynasty
First King – Yalambar
Last King - Gasti

Table 1. The Rulers of Licchavi Period (c. 78 - c. 879 AD)

Rulers	Approx. Reign duration
The first Licchavi king Bhaskaravarma, was followed by his descendants Bhumivarma, Chandravarma, Jayavarma, Varsavarma, Sarvavarma, Prithvi, Jestha, Hari, Kuber, Siddhi, Haridattavarma, Vasudeva...	NA
Vrsadeva	c. 400 AD
Sankaradeva	c. 425 AD
Dharmadeva	c. 450 AD
Manadeva I	464-505 AD
Mahideva	NA
Vasantadeva	506-532 AD
Manudeva	NA
Vamanadeva	538 AD
Ramadeva	545 AD
Ganadeva	560-565 AD
Gangadeva	567 AD
Bhaumagupta	c. 567-590 AD
Manadeva II	c. 575 AD
Sivadeva I	590-604 AD
Amsuvarma	605-621 AD
Udayadeva	621 AD
Dhruvadeva + Jisnugupta	624-625 AD
Bhimarjunadeva + Jisnugupta	631-633 AD
Jisnugupta	NA
Visnugupta	633 AD
Bhimarjunadeva + Visnugupta	640-641 AD
Visnugupta	NA
Narendradeva	643-679 AD
Sivadeva II	694-705 AD
Jayadeva II	713-733 AD
Manadeva III	756 AD
Baliraja	826 AD
Baladeva	847 AD
Manadeva IV	877 AD

Table 2. The Rulers, or Probable Rulers of the Transitional or 'Dark Period' (c. 879-1200 AD)

Rulers or Probable Rulers	Approx. Reign duration
Rudradeva	NA
Balarjunadeva	NA
Raghavadeva	879 AD
Sankaradeva I	920 AD
Gunakamadeva I	987-990 AD
Narendradeva I + Udayadeva	998 AD
Udayadeva	1004 AD
Nirbhayadeva	1005 AD
Nirbhayadeva + Rudradeva I	1008 AD
Bhojadeva	1011 AD
Rudradeva I + Bhojadeva	1012 AD
Bhojadeva + Rudradeva I + Laxmikamadeva I	1015 AD
Laxmikamadeva I	NA
Jayadeva	1024-1039 AD
Bhaskaradeva	1045-1048AD
Baladeva	1048-1060 AD
Pradyumnakamadeva	1060-1066 AD
Nagarjunadeva	1066-1069 AD
Sankaradeva II	1069-1083 AD
Vamadeva	1083-1085 AD
Harsadeva	1085-1099 AD
Simhadeva	1099-1122 AD
Sivadeva	1099-1126 AD
Indradeva	1126-1137 AD
Manadeva	1137-1140 AD
Narendradeva II	1140-1146 AD
Anandadeva I	1147-1166 AD
Rudradeva II	1167-1174 AD
Amritadeva	1174-1178 AD
Somesvaradeva	1178-1183 AD
Gunakamadeva II	1185-1195 AD
Laxmikamadeva II	1192-1197 AD
Vijayakamadeva	1192-1200 AD

Table 3. The Rulers of Early Malla Period (1200-1482 AD)

Rulers	Approx. Reign duration
Arideva Malla I	1200-1216 AD
Abhaya Malla	1216-1255 AD
Ranasuradeva	c. 1221 AD
Jayadeva	1256-1258 AD
Bhimadeva	1258-1271 AD
Sinha Malla	1271-1274 AD
Ananta Malla	1274-1307 AD
Ananadadeva II	1308-1320 AD
Ari Malla II	1320-1344 AD
Rajadeva	1347-1361 AD
Arjunadeva	1361-1381 AD
Sthiti Malla (Jayasthiti Malla)	1382-1395 AD
Dharma Malla	1396-1408 AD
Jyotir Malla	1408-1428 AD
Yaksya Malla	1428-1482 AD

After Yaksya Malla, his sons established different independent kingdoms in Kathmandu (Kantipur), Bhaktapur (Bhadgaun) and Lalitpur (Patan). In time, the rivalry between these brotherhoods led to fragmentation and poor rule in the country as well as the greatest competitive building periods.

**Table 4. The Rulers of the Independent Kingdom of Bhaktapur (Bhadgaun)
(1482-1769 AD)**

Malla Rulers	Approx. Reign duration
Raya, Ratna, Rana, Bhima	1482-1504 AD
Vira	1504 AD
Bhuvana	1505-1519 AD
Rana, Vira, Jita	1519-1522 AD
Rana, Bhima, Vira, Jita	1522-1523 AD
Prana alone, with Jita, or with Jita & Vira	1524-1548 AD
Viswa	1548-1560 AD
Trailokya alone, with Tribhuvana, or with Tribhuvan & Gangadevi	1561-1613 AD
Jagajjyotir	1614-1637 AD
Naresa	1637-1643 AD
Jagatprakasa	1643-1672 AD
Jitamitra alone or with Ugra	1673-1696 AD
Bhupatindra	1696-1722 AD
Ranajit	1722-1769 AD

**Table 5. The Rulers of the Independent Kingdom of Kathmandu (Kantipur)
(1482-1768 AD)**

Malla Rulers	Approx. Reign duration
Ratna alone or with Ari	1484-1520 AD
Surya	1520-1529 AD
Amara (Narendra)	1529-1560 AD
Mahendra	1560-1574 AD
Sadasiva	1575-1581 AD
Sivasimha (with Ranajitsimha)	1578-1619 AD
Laxminarasimha	1619-1641 AD
Pratapa	1641-1674 AD
Nripendra	1674-1680 AD
Parthivendra	1680-1687 AD
Bhupalendra	1687-1700 AD
Bhaskara (Mahindrasimha)	1700-1722 AD
Jagajjaya	1722-1734 AD
Jayaprakasa (reign interrupted by his infant son)	c. 1769 AD
Jyotiprakasa (infant son)	1746-1752 AD



**Table 6. The Rulers of the Independent Kingdom of Lalitpur (Patan)
(1482-1768 AD)**

Malla Rulers, mahapatras & one Shah King	Approx. Reign duration
Raya Malla (his brothers & nephews in varying combinations)	1482-1519 AD
Visnusimha, the pradhan mahapatra, ruling Patan independent of Malla	1536 AD
Purandarshimha, alone or with his brothers	1560-1597 AD
Malla rule reestablished through annexation by Sivasimha	1597-1619 AD
Siddhinarasimha	1619-1661 AD
Srinivasa	1661-1684 AD
Yognarendra	1684-1705 AD
Lokaprakasa	1705-1706 AD
Indra	1706-1709 AD
Mahindra	1709-1714 AD
Viranarasimha (a rival ruled briefly)	1709 AD
Riddhinarasimha	1715-1717 AD
Bhaskara (Mahindrasimha)	1717-1722 AD
Yogprakasa	1722-1729 AD
Visnu	1729-1745 AD
Rajyaprakasa	1745-1758 AD
Viswajit	1758-1760 AD
Jayaprakasa of Kathmandu	1760-1762 AD
Ranajit of Bhaktapur	1762-1763 AD
Jayaprakasa (again)	1763 AD
Dalmardana Shah from Nuwakot	1764-1765 AD
Tejnarasimha Malla	1765-1768 AD

Table7. The Shah Rulers of unified Nepal (1769 AD -)

Shah Rulers	Approx. Reign duration	Prime Ministers	Dates of Office
Prithvi Narayan (1722-1775 AD)	1769-1775 AD		
Ascended to throne of Gorkha 1743 AD			
Conquered Kathmandu and Patan 1768 AD			
Conquered Bhaktapur 1769 AD			
Pratap Singh (1751-1777 AD)	1775-1777 AD		
Rana Bahadra (1775-1806 AD)	1777-1799 AD		
Abdicated 1799 AD			
Girvan Yuddha Bikram (1797-1816 AD)	1799-1816 AD	Bhimsen Thapa	1806-1837 AD
Rajendra Bikram (1813-1881 AD)	1816-1847 AD	Mathbar Singh Thapa	1843-1845 AD
Dethroned 1847 AD		Jung Bahadur Rana	1846-1856 AD
		Bam Bahadur Rana	1856-1857 AD
		Jung Bahadur Rana	1857-1877 AD
Surendra Bikram (1847-1881 AD)	1847-1881 AD	Rana Uddip Singh	1877-1885 AD
Prithvi Bir Bikram (1875-1911 AD)	1881-1911 AD	Bir Shumsher	1885-1901 AD
		Dev Shumsher	1901 AD
		Chandra Shumsher	1901-1929 AD
Tribhuvan Bir Bikram (1906-1955 AD)	1911-1955 AD	Bhim Shumsher	1929-1932 AD
		Juddha Shumsher	1932-1945 AD
		Padma Shumsher	1945-1948 AD
		Mohan Shumsher	1948-1951 AD
End of 104 years of interim Rana Period (1846-1950 AD)			
Mahendra Bir Bikram (1920-1972 AD)	1955-1972 AD		
Birendra Bir Bikram (1945-2001 AD)	1972-2001 AD		
Dipendra Bir Bikram (1971-2001 AD)	2001AD		
Gyanendra Bir Bikram	2001- 2005 AD		



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